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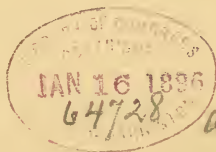
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Mary E. Bryan

POEMS AND STORIES IN VERSE

Mrs. _____ *Heards*
BY MARY E. BRYAN



ATLANTA, GA.
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A WORD TO MY READERS.

The poems in this little volume were written in the scant leisure hours, scattered through busy years of pen-work in more prosaic lines. Only one of them was ever offered to a publisher; those that have been in print appeared in the periodicals I was editing at the time when they were written. Writing them was to me a recreation and a pleasure. They were spontaneous, springing from the feeling, thought or fancy of the hour. Some of them are sombre; but life has more shadow than sunshine, and it is in shadowed ways that we gather the deepest lessons of life, as more fragrant dew is found in the heart of flowers that bloom in the shade.

Some of the poems have been widely copied; and some of the stories in verse seem to have been prized as recitations. Such as they are, I offer these collected bits of verse to my friends, who have so often called for them with words of kindly praise, and to the public, who may not be so generous in their estimate, saying once more, that they are but as wild flowers, sown by the winds of fancy and feeling, between the furrows of more prosaic work in the field of daily duty.

MARY E. BRYAN.



POEMS AND STORIES IN VERSE

MADELEINE—A MYSTERY.

Do you remember
A lovely, mysterious woman you knew,
In a land where the palm and the orange grew—
A woman with eyes of fire and dew,
 With a star-white face,
 And a mystical grace,
With slumbrous poppies upon her breast,
That yet would heave in a strange unrest—
 Do you remember?
 Like sunset's ember
Shone her crown of wonderful golden hair.
Ah! men had loved her, to their despair,
This strange, sweet woman, Madeleine Weir.

Do you remember
The night you last saw Madeleine's home,
Where the waters of Mad River swirled in foam,
The old gray house, and the cotton-wood tree,
And the pine that sung of the sobbing sea—
 Do you remember?
It was sad November.

The sky was pale and the moon was old,
And the mist was ghostly white on the wold,
 As we ran through the night,
 In horror and fright,
And Madge, the Indian, with step as light
And swift as her arrow in its flight,
 Ran on before,
Crying, "We shall not see her more;
We shall find her dead inside her door!"

Dead! How you laughed!
As though the wine of the gods you'd quaffed;
When we gained at last the moldering hall
And saw, high up on its ivied wall,
Madeleine's eyes at the window tall—
Madeleine's eyes and Madeleine's face,
Like a star a-gleam in that lonely place—
 Was the Indian daft?

For never, oh! never had Madeleine
Looked more like the stately, the gem-eyed queen
Of some strange, bright race in a charmed land,
Than she looked this hour as we saw her stand
By the window, holding her marble hand
 Over her heart,
 With her lips apart,
Her bright hair veiling her like a cloud,
And her strange eyes shining, high and proud.

White as the foam
Of the river that swirled beneath the dome
Of her old, her stately, her tottering home
Were her gleaming neck and her upraised brow.
Was Madeleine taking some mystic vow?
How should we know? We never had known
Whence came she, or wherefore she dwelt alone;
What strange secret she hid in her breast,
Never to mortal had she confessed.

There she stood in the moonlight cold,
Gazing out over wood and wold;
The look in her eyes made our pulses chill.
Loudly you called her, but, statue-still,
 With her hand on her heart,
 And her lips apart,
She stood at that weird, wild hour of the night—
An eerie shape in a robe of white.

What was she watching for? What would come
Over the wold in its mist-shroud dumb,
Or over the forest, dim and still,
Or over the far-off, shadowy hill—
 What would come?
 Her lips were dumb,
But a dread lay frozen-fixed in her eyes;
Would it come in some ghostly, terrible guise?

“When the clock strikes one
My life shall be done.

Down by the Mad River make my grave,
Down where its waters moan and rave.”
Thus she had said to her Indian slave;
And the woman had sped in mortal fright,
And summoned us here at dead of night.

* * * * *

Clang! at last from the time-piece old.
The hollow sound through the building rolled,
And we felt it rock
With a sudden shock,
Shiver an instant from dome to base,
And a ghastly glare lit all the place;
We saw it gleam upon Madeleine’s face.
Had a lurid star
Fallen from far,
And shivered against her window bar?

It passed in a breath;
Silent as death
Was the gloomy room and the moldy wall;
And she leaned there deaf to your frenzied call;
For in that instant the Thing had come,
The Thing she had watched for, white and dumb;
Was it some wronged soul from the lost ones’ home?

Yes, it had come,
And she met her doom,
Proud as the last of some royal line,
With never a moan and never a sign
Of what she had suffered, or what she had wrought,
Or what was the fiend she had silently fought.
(Was she the criminal some had thought?)
She passed, perchance, to the peace she sought,
With her white hand pressed
On her whiter breast,
To prison the secret never confessed.

OUT OF THE DEPTHS.

Never would we have seen
This fairy sea-growth—frost-work traced in green—
Upon this tablet pressed
Had not a storm, lashing the moaning waves,
Uprooted it from the cool, hidden caves
Deep in the ocean's breast.

Never would we have known
Full many a poet-thought, fair as this fern—
Thought quick to stir the sympathies that yearn,
The hopes that in us dwell
Like echoes in a shell—
Had not the thought been torn from the poet's breast
By storm of grief or sorrow's wild unrest.

KEYRIE—THE SOUL-LESS.

Come to me, Keyrie; the storm is over—
Storm of passion and vain unrest;
Flood-tide of feeling or strong endeavor
Never shall beat again in my breast,
Come to me, being, witching and eerie,
Sprite that bears not the burden of soul;
Rest me, delight me, shame me, Keyrie,
Mock at the spectres of Thought and Dole.

Never has dread of the weird Hereafter,
Or ruth for the past in your being had part;
Shiver with your keen, silvery laughter
Memories that crystallize round my heart.
Never for you in Life's dim by-way
Has loomed the wan-eyed ghost, Regret,
Never, upon its scorching highway
Has Care, the hollow-cheeked crone, been met.

Never has crouched in its musky forest,
Love, the beautiful, cruel beast;
Never, when spirit-need was sorest,
Has a creed spread for you a Barmecide feast.
Deep-mined thought and lore of the ages
Never have troubled that brown-curved head;
Little you reck of the science of sages;
Books are to you dry bones of the dead.

You can whistle the bobolink's lilting measure;
You can hear the murmur of under-ground streams,
You know where the hid pool gurgles for pleasure,
And of what the heron beside it dreams.
The rhymth of the rain on the young leaves plashing
The drowsy twitter of birds beneath,
The coiled storm-cloud and the thunder crashing,
The rainbow bending its glittering wreath;

These you know; but the hot out-gushing
Of tears from the smitten human soul;
The dull unrest, the regret slow-crushing,
The yearning after an unseen goal—
These are spared you, sweet: a soul was forgotten
When they shaped you—beautiful, butterfly thing.
Say; on the stalk of a world dry-rotten,
How came an orchid like you to spring?

These are the days of stubble and gleaning;
Our roses of joy have a heart of rue;
But you, stray off-shoot of primal greenening,
Seem born of an earlier sun and dew—
A graft of the gay Greek life, my pagan,
When the woods were alive with the blithe half-gods:
Nymph and dryad, and faun and dragon—
And a thrill with the music of Pan's green rods.

Come to me, sprite, let your silvery laughter
Startle my ghosts and bid them flee.
Laugh till you shake each sensitive rafter
Of your quivering temple—the poplar tree.
Come to me, Keyrie, for life is dreary;
Thought is Care and Love is unrest,
The soul is a burden—sorrowful, weary;
Be glad that it never was born in your breast.

THE IMPRISONED "MOONSHINER."

The swift rain tramples upon the roof;
Wild the sound as the rushing hoof
Of a spectral horse from a ghostly fight;
It bears my spirit away to-night.
I hear the wind on my native hills;
I hear the roar of a hundred rills,
As they rush in foam down the mountain side.
Oh! my mountains! the free, the wide!
Oh! to you on the winds to ride!

My cabin—'tis dearer far than a shrine;
On the mountain side I see it shine,
Like a star dropped down—the star is mine.
'Tis the blaze on my hearth of the mountain pine;
In its light I see my Amy's face,
And the baby's crib in its corner place,
And my boy with his sun-burned arm around

The neck of old Bumper, my trustiest hound.
Ho! Bumper! ho! Tricks! 'tis a night for the coon.
Dark—with no glimmer of star or moon;
The rain is done, or it will be soon;
With a good pine torch and my trusty gun,
To-night, old boys, we can have some fun.

What's that? my God 'tis the rattling chain!
My home! 'twas the dream of a fevered brain!
I am back in this stifling cell again!

HER BURDEN.

Over her head the sky was drear,
The wind was bleak, the way was rough.
She had her heavy heart to bear,
That seemed enough;

But one who sits above Earth's shade,
Yet watches human hopes and harms,
Sent down a messenger who laid
A burden in her arms.

Men shook their heads: "this woman's way,"
They said, "is won through pain and fear;
It is not well on her to lay
Another care."

But angels smiled in sweet content,
And said, "'tis well, for He is wise,
And often are his blessings sent
In a disguise."

And lo! the woman on whose breast
The burden had been laid,
Clasped it and smiled, and by new strength
Her feet were stayed.

She saw not the dark sky; her eyes
Were on her burden bent;
Nor felt the bitter winds, her thoughts
On this intent.

She checked her tears lest they might fright
Its innocent repose,
And bade a smile bloom on her cheek—
A flower from snows.

Men marveled; they saw not so clear
As eyes bent from above;
They knew not that 'tis balm to sink
Self in sweet love.

That what to them a burden seems
May be a help most dear;
For Heaven's dispensary holds no cup
Of deeper cheer

Than mother-love to one like her,
Forsaken, wronged and wild;
To heal her broken heart, God laid
On it a child.

HE AND SHE.

A FLORIDA IDYL.

Low on the water's heaving breast
The sun had dropped his golden crest;
The boat was rocking on the tide.
The oars lay in their locks at rest;
His eyes his tender thoughts confessed;
Hers dropped—a hovering smile to hide.

She was his “winter girl”—his best;
He wrote her sonnets that expressed,
He said, the ardor of his breast.
Beauty was hers with sense allied;
He had good looks—that none denied—
But for the rest—the chaperons sighed.

“Ah! look!” (he pointed to the west)
“At yon green gem on Ocean's breast,
That fairy island in our lea—
What a sweet home for you and me!
There, with these balmy skies above,
How sweetly we could live and love!
The palm should shelter us o'erhead,
The grass should our soft carpet spread.
There, where the vine her blossom shakes,
Beside yon loveliest of lakes”—

"Where chiggers bite," she said, "and snakes!"

"How blissfully should pass our day,"

He said—his gaze was far away—

"At morn we'd wander hand in hand
And gather shells beside the strand;
When noon-tide came our limbs we'd lave,
Like sea-gods, in the cooling wave."

"The hungry 'gators we would brave,"

She added, still demure and grave.

His gaze was on the rising moon.

He murmured, "In the afternoon,
Hid in the woods of endless June,
We'd listen to the ring-dove's croon.
On mossy banks we'd take our ease,"

"Nor heed when the mosquitoes tease,
And swarming sand-flies make us sneeze,"
She sweetly said, as though to please.

"These purple waves should shut us in,"
More slowly now did he begin.

"Our cup of life with love empearled,
We would ask nothing of the world;
We'd fill the days with fancies fine,
And worship at sweet Nature's shrine."

"Would we not sometimes need to dine?"
Timid she asked; the flickering smile
Betrayed her mischief's hidden guile.

"Your lips should be my cup of wine,"
He said, "The purple-berried vine
And pau-pau tree our feast should spread."

She murmured, "We would need some bread."

"We'd scorn all petty vanities,"
He went on, slightly ill at ease.
"You would seem lovely in my eyes,
Dressed always in this simple guise—
That hat with a bird's wing upon it—"

She said, "I'd need an Easter bonnet."

That gown—'twould stir a poet's passion."

"Dear me! 'tis nearly out of fashion—
I'd need one in a later style;
Could we persuade Madame de Lyle
To come out to this lovely isle?
And then my milliner—" He groaned.
"Ah, sweet Romance is dead," he moaned.
"Where can I find, on land or sea,
Some sweet, uncalculating She,
Content to live for love and me?"

She said, "You might try in Feejee."

THE MIDNIGHT TRYST.

The winter wood was gray and chill,
The moon was old, the winds were dead;
The heart of the wood was weirdly still,
And she started at her own rustling tread
As though it were the trail of a shroud;
And she shuddered as to herself she said:
"If only the owl would cry aloud,
Or the leaf would move that lifts on high
It's dead, black finger against the sky;
If these snake-like vines that hang and twine
Would stir or swing in the dim moonshine:
Then I would not faint with this nameless dread."
But the wood was still as the breathless dead;
The leaf did not stir nor the gray owl scream.
And she had come there, fantasy led—
To this weird, wild wood—on the faith of a dream,
When they thought her asleep in her maiden bed.

Three nights, while she slept on her tear-cold cheek,
Her long-lost love in a dream had come,
And said to her low: "The pine will speak
For me, though the rest of the world is dumb—
The brave old pine in the heart of the wood,
By the still, black pool where last we stood;
At the middle hour of the night go there—
The pine shall a sign and a message bear."

Three days she carried the dream close locked
In her troubled breast, and gave no sign:
They would but mock at the dream as they mocked
In rage and pride at her face, that could pine
And pale for a faithless lover, long gone
To a land which the sun shines warm upon—
Gone so long that they could but say,
“He has forsaken her; foul befall
The steps of the traitor, wherever they stray!”
And her bearded brothers, fierce and tall,
Longed with his blood her wrong to pay,
And chafed when they saw that a dreary pall,
Hung for her on the sunniest day;
And when a curse on his head they would call,
She would drop her eyes to his ring and pray.
They would have wrenched the ring away,
But that her finger grew so small,
They said, “Of itself it soon must fall.”

* * * * *

She has reached the heart of the winter wood—
Still and deeper the shadows brood;
She sees the deep pool's glimmering disk,
Where falls one ray from the waning moon;
The pine tree stands like an obelisk,
Still, as if carved of the granite stone;
In its dark-plumed top there is no stir—
Never a breath, nor a voice nor a moan—
It holds no token, no message for her.

She waits, she listens—her hands grow numb,
Close pressed to her heart to hush its beats;
No sign her straining senses greets
On earth or in air—the pine is dumb:
Yet, as if breathed from a viewless shrine,
Thrills the wordless whisper, “It will come!”
And breathless she stands and awaits the sign.

What was it? There is no breeze to shake
The long, light leaf that lifts on high
Its dead black finger against the sky;
Yet the pine-boughs suddenly thrill and quake,
As though a breath of the storm swept by—
The pine, that had seemed a shaft of stone
In the stirless wood, it moves alone.
And now a sound, a sigh, a moan—
Wind-like, yet human in its tone—
Fills the slow-swaying boughs o’erhead,
Lades the air with a spell of dread:
“Dead!” it syllables; “dead—dead—dead!”

Nearer it steals like a wave of the seas.
Her heart is hushed—she sinks to her knees—
Her eyes are closed—she nothing sees;
But a touch that is not the touch of the breeze
Moves through her loosened tresses now—
Falls like a kiss on her wasted brow—
And a sense of perfect peace and love
Bears her up like the wings of a dove.

A moment only, and it is gone!
In the silent wood she stands alone;
The pine does not stir, nor the dead leaf shake,
And the long black shadows sleep on the lake;
A moon-ray falls like an elfin wand
On the withered lily of her hand—
Glints on the bright, betrothal band.
She kissed the ring. “You are mine,” she said;
“I will wear you now till my life is sped!
He is not false—he is only dead!”

THE CHERRY ROGUES.

June skies were arching the green earth with blue,
The early pear was mellowing and the grape
Hoarding the suns and dews within its round
And turning them by wondrous alchemy
Into ripe lusciousness. Bluff Farmer Gray
And his two boys had tramped the orchard through,
And eyed its fruity promise with a smile
Until he stood before his cherry trees
And saw some stems stripped of their crimson
wealth.
“The birds, the feathered rogues! A plague on
them!”
He cried in wrath. “Look you—you youngsters
both—

You, Paul and Harry—break up every nest
You find upon these grounds. You hear me now?
Smash all the eggs, wring all the pesky necks
Of these young wretches fed here with my fruit.”

It was next day at sunset that I sat
In the old garden arbor, where a vine
Of honeysuckle sweetened all the air—
A wilderness of bloom—in whose sweet depths
A bird had built. I often heard her stir
And flutter softly in her fragrant nest,
And once I peeped and caught her shy bright eye
As she sat listening to her mate that sang
All day upon the arbor’s highest point—
A lookout station o’er the treasures hid
Below in fragrant bloom.

I sat, and heard
The tramp of boyish feet, and saw unseen
The faces of dark Hal and blue-eyed Paul.
A vine caught Hal’s straw hat; the sudden jerk
Stirred the deep nest and set the hungry bills
To chirping. “Ha! a nest, a nest!” cries Hal.
“You know what papa told us; here’s a chance
To pay the cherry rogues.”

They pulled apart
The blossomed vines, and standing tiptoe looked
At the three queer, half-naked, callow things,
With bills wide-open, helpless in their reach.

Paul stretched his arm out, touched them and drew
back

As though the touch of the soft, fluttering things
Had burned his fingers. Sudden, overhead
There came a whir, a shrill, sharp cry, and down
Fluttered the mother; keen, beseeching fear
And mother anguish in her eye, her shriek—
And the swift beating of her wings. The boys
Looked from the mother to her young: "What fun
To kill them all!" Hal said; but Paul spoke low:

"Do you remember when the mad dog rushed
On us at the street corner with his jaws
A-dripping foam, his eyes blood-shot and fierce,
How mother ran between us and the dog
And stretched her hands to him, a-crying out
So pitifully that he stood stock-still,
Stared at her, then turned off another way?
And mother cried and hugged us, praying too.
It was not long before she died, you know."

Hal's eyes turned to the mother-bird, his hands
Loosened their hold, the blossomed vines released
Recoiled back to their place and hid once more
The nest and the unconscious little brood
A mother up in heaven had saved that day.

HIS SOCIETY PLAY.

A COMEDIETTA IN ONE ACT.

SCENE.—*The top story of a lodging-house. MR. HOMER SOPHOCLES SMITH alone in his room. He holds up a blotted manuscript, and exclaims:*

Success at last; 'tis finished! Happy day!
I've written "finis" to an ordered play.
A thrilling situation closes it;
'Twill be, I feel assured, the season's hit.
It is intense, yet light, with the variety
Expected in a drama of society—
Matching the order, nearly as can be.
True, 'twould have pleased me more had I been free
To follow my own ideas, but she—
Though vague—was quite imperious in decree.
She is the star. "Call me not 'leading lady!'"
She said. "'Tis commonplace and smacks of pay-
day."

She's fair, though, *entre nous*, she's past her heyday.
But on the day she climbed my garret's height,
And said, as the angel to the prophet, "Write,"
To my sad eyes, she seemed indeed a star;
For I sat there smoking my last cigar,
Debating over a pile of unpaid bills,
Whether to drown my genius (with my ills)
In Hudson Bay, or turn it to a mill,

Grind advertising rhymes of a patent pill.
She saved me—the fair star. Into the room
She swept—'twas more than broom
Had done for weeks—inclined her classic head.
“You are a poet, sir, I am told,” she said.
“A playwright also. I am here to-day
To order a first-class society play,
Which I will take if pleased, terms not too high;
But you must make it, like Jack Horner's pie,
Full of good things—wit, sentiment, emotion,
Fads, follies, hypnotism, divorce, devotion,
With scope for dress-effects—a ball-room scene,
A wedding, a scene in court. The Queen
Of Spain ordered of Worth two gowns like mine,
And I've a cloak that is a thing divine.
A special scene should be for its display.
The dialogue must be witty, tender, gay,
With the best points for me. Mark that, I pray.
Make the play suit; a check you'll have from me
Or from my manager, and tickets free.”

She bent her head, like a fair wind-stirred flower,
And glided down from my fifth-story bower.
Then, quick to work my hopeful fancy flew.
What shall inspire? Aha! I've credit new.
They saw her carriage; they'll add to what is due,
A dozen of beer, two bottles of mountain dew,
And one of ink, a ream of paper, too.
Then all elate, I bent me to the toil,

Consumed the sunshine and the midnight oil.
Behold the result! A play Shakespeare would
praise,
Though little his praise would count these latter
days!
I've got all in—passion and situation,
Wit, wedding, wicked wiles, and separation.
I wait now only the star's approbation.
I'll read it to her. I think 'twill strike her dumb
With pleased surprise. Ah! here I see her come.

[*Enter MISS MARVILLE DE MONTAGUE, panting
and fanning herself.*

"These horrid stairs! Why do you live so high?"

"That the gods may visit me and none espy
And goddesses—"

"They should have wings to fly."

"Ah, no! They'd leave too soon. I'd have them
stay—"

The fairest one, at least—to hear my play;
For it is done; the last word written to-day.
You'll let me read it to you? Sit here, please;
I've but one chair, but I've a pair of knees
That will esteem it but a pleasure sweet
To kneel an hour at your dainty feet."

[*Kneels at her feet, unfolds manuscript and proceeds to read the play. Pauses near the end of an impassioned love scene.*]

- “Isn’t that a fine speech?” “’Tis too fine by far
To give to *him*; it should be for the star.”
“The star must not make love.” “The star makes *all*
The hits in the play; the telling things must fall
Only to her. You’ll change this scene. Go on!”
“Change my best scene!” (*aside*) “Half my elation’s
gone!”

[*Resumes the reading of the play. At the end of second act says:*

- “I am sure you must admire this situation.”
“Good heavens! how *can* it gain my admiration?
’Tis good, I grant, but ’tis for the soubrette,
Not me; ’twill make the audience forget
My part that came before. How could
You blunder so? I thought you understood—”
“I understood that even a solitaire
Shows not its worth without a setting fair.
All parts should please; that is my creed in brief;
You could not jest *here*, for your role is grief
Throughout *this* scene; the next will see you rise
To grand emotion that will melt all eyes.
You and your lover have an equal part
In a strong scene to thrill each listener’s heart.”
“An *equal* part! What ignorance! That would mar

My right of prominence. I am the star.
I've Paris costumes and a special car.
I bade you write a play to make *me* shine,
Not to let other lights detract from mine.
Have you put in that scene to show my cloak
That cost ten thousand? No? Then you're a poke!
You have no idea how to write a play
For a *Star*, young man. I wish you a good-day!"

[*Sweeps out, setting her foot upon the manuscript which has fallen from the hands of the paralyzed poet. Enter the MANAGER.*

"What's this, my friend; you seem in quite a heat?"
"She has refused it, spurned it with her feet."
"I thought as much; I met her on the street
Black as a storm-cloud. What was her demur?"
"She wanted *everything* to be for her.
All the good points." "Of course; that's the star's
way.
You've written, I doubt not, a good all-round play;
But that's not wanted. I, you understand,
Have taken that ticklish thing—a star—in hand.
To manufacture her I've been at pains
(Trusting the public's gullibleness for gains),
Got up a scandal, helped on a divorce,
Advertised wildly, bribed the critics, of course;
Showed gorgeous pictures, with redundant eyes,
And bust and arms, but nose reduced in size.

Then, with a blast of trumpets, near and far
Upon the public launched my balloon star.
She was a 'grand success,' alleged—but, ah!
When genius does not wing her fiery car,
It takes a deal of gas to buoy a star.
It takes, too, managerial skill to steer
A creature apt with every whim to veer.
She's spoiled, of course, having no true love of art,
And only vanity to take its part.
She's quick with fanciful caprice to vex us,
More self-willed than a mustang mule of Texas,
And kicking 'gainst each well-constructed reason
In a way would baffle the horse-taming Gleason.
And so, my lad, a play—to put it brief—
Won't do for her, unless, like Joseph's sheaf,
She stands in it alone, while th' others crouch
Their humble insignificance to avouch.
Don't burn your play; but put it on the shelf.
The public sense of art will right itself.
We'll fly our star just now. She's our sensation;
But few stars equal a full constellation,
And soon as fades the meretricious glamor,
We'll come back to the good old all-round drama.

A FILIBUSTER.

REMINISCENT OF THE DAYS OF LOPEZ.

Long years ago, ere life had drained
My spirit's fountain to the lees,
While yet a wistful, dreaming child
Beside my father's knees,
A radiant being crossed my sphere—
A meteor, bright and high—
A soul of fire, an eye of light,
That seemed not made to die.

Oh, that blue summer by the sea!
Some magic wraps it yet in glow
When borne upon his buoyant words,
I felt around me flow
The golden airs of old romance,
While high, heroic dreams
Rose at his glance, as cloudy towers
Shine out when lightning gleams.

Poet and knight at soul was he,
Crusader for all right and truth,
Burning to lay on some high shrine
The energies of youth.
It may be judgment tempered not
The enthusiast's eager fire;
But glorious seemed the zeal that lit
His spirit's strong desire.

Glorious to me, whose heart was thrilled
By words scarce understood,
As he who heard the magic flute
Play in the enchanted wood,
I heard him tell of that fair isle
Whose beauty tyrants blight,
Whose children pine beneath their palms
For Freedom's sacred right.

And he had vowed to break their chains,
Or else his blood to pour,
In willing tide for freedom's sake
Upon that island shore
"A knight"—I thought—"as Godfrey was,
Self-vowed to free a Holy Land—
Fair Cuba on whose fateful shore
Waits a devoted band."

He left us for that fairy isle;
He sailed away at evening's close;
I watched his fading bark, and mused
"He goes to meet his foes."
My yearning spirit sent a prayer
Across the blue gulf waves for him,
And turning, all the shore seemed bare,
And all the sunset dim.

He perished in a hopeless cause,
One of a brave, mistaken, band;

They scooped a shallow grave for him
 Within the burning sand;
Its only mark a lonely palm
 That in the grave has root;
Lofty but barren, like his hopes,
 That bore, alas!—no fruit—
No fruit from all those glowing hopes
 That dyed his cheek so red,
No guerdon but a nameless grave
 With the dishonored dead!

And this is long ago, but now
 The rallying “Freedom” cry,
Echoing once more from the fair shore
 That heard his latest sigh,
Brings back his face; and through the mists
 I seem, as on that summer’s close,
To watch his fading sail and muse
 “*He goes to meet his foes.*”

MORO—A DUMB SAVIOR.

Ho! Moro, Moro, my dog, where are you?

Moro: He has gone—he has left me: he

The last, the only friend. Forsaken by *him*,

By the one living thing that clung to me

When the storm stripped my life; who followed me

Through cold and hunger and wild, weary tramps

On the bleak highways! So, at last, he's gone!

Lured by the smell of Athol's savory meats,

The warmth of Athol's hearth.

An hour ago,

When I met Athol yonder in the street,

He said, with insolent pity in his look,

"Sell *me* that dog. He taxes you too sore

To feed him. Here's your price " "Sell you my dog!

Sell the one thing that keeps alive in me

A spark of trust in anything on earth?

Never! Your gold has bought all that was mine—

My lands, my home, my friends, my promised bride.

It cannot buy my dog: he would not go;

Your chains could never hold him, he would leave

Your juicy meats to come and share my crust.

Put up your gold: it can not buy my dog."

"We'll see," he said, and turned upon his heel.

The low-born insolent! His gold had bought

My old, proud home, my flattering friends, the graves

Of my dead sires; aye, even her—my love
With eyes as blue as heaven, as full of truth
(I would have sworn so *once*) as heaven of stars.
God! how I loved her, how I trusted her!
How her voice thrilled me on that summer night
When, with her hands in mine, I said: “My love,
A flickering star of fame has mocked my hopes
Since dreaming boyhood. Never did it beam
With steady glow, till now—now that it shines
In your sweet eyes. *Now* I will follow it,
For bays are worth the winning but to lay
At your dear feet.” But she: “I love you not
For laurels or for gold, but for yourself,
Your own proud manhood and your faithful heart.”

These were her words. Just Heaven, that lips so fair
Could utter words so false! Not care for gold!
'Twas *all* she cared for. When 'twas swept away
Her love went with it. All my faith went, too—
All my proud dreams; my star of fame went down,
And whelmed in black despair I fled the place,
A beggared outcast: home, friends, love—all gone.

With curses on my lips and brain on fire,
I fled through the wet night that shut me round
While gleamed the city lights afar. I cried,
“I stand alone, with not one living thing
To care what doom despair may drive me to.”
But as I spoke a soft head touched my knee,

A warm tongue lapped my hand. Dumb sympathy
Of a poor brute! my faithful dog had broke
His chain to follow me.

My faithful dog !

Ha, ha! There is no faith in man or beast
Upon this hollow globe. My dog is gone,
Yonder in Athol's home that once was mine.
He followed *him*—lured by his bait of food.
The craven-hearted wretch! True, he was starved;
But so am I. Yet I spurned Athol's gold,
Offered as price for *him*. Well, he is gone!

Why did I come back here? I know too well.
I came, poor fool, to look upon the ground
Her foot had pressed. Perchance, she loved me still:
Her father made her turn from me. Who knows?
Perchance I'd find her pale of cheek and pined
With weeping for the outcast she still loved.
Ah, fool! Why, never in the days gone by,
When my hot kisses fed its budding bloom,
Did her cheek blossom with so rich a rose
As glowed on it to-night. How proud she looked,
In those far-trailing robes of moonlit silk,
The rubies glittering on the foam-white hand
That lay on Athol's arm! She did not see
The wretch who, crouched in the shadow, watched her
pass.

He saw me: Athol, proud, triumphant Athol,
Who'd told me that I had not bread to feed
My dog awhile before. He knew me now.

He bent his head and whispered in her ear,
And broke into a mocking laugh, while she—
Arched her white neck and smiled with scorn-curved
lips.

Hark to the music! She is dancing now!
That waltz of Weber! Ah! how sweet it is!
How the tall windows blaze! Fair forms flash by,
Whirling like brilliant blossoms in the mad
Maelstrom of melody. Yes, they dance,
They feast. My dog feasts yonder in the halls
My proud ancestors reared. And I—I stand
Beneath the mocking stars and freezing skies
Deserted, friendless, gnawed by hunger-pangs.
Curses upon them! If there be a hell,
When earth is hell enough, I'd brave its fires
A thousand years for leave to crush them here,
And make them suffer as I suffer now.

Why should I suffer? There's one refuge still.
When life grows torture we can shake it off.
Death beckons us with shadowy hand, and points
To the abyss of nothingness and rest.
Rest—is it rest? What if this fever-dream
Of life goes on beyond the grave—out-ide
The shattered temple of the flesh, as birds
Still flutter blindly round a broken nest?
It is too mad a doubt. The dead are dead.
The hour is past for dotard's dreams.

And yet—

My mother's prayers, her cradle hymns—Away
These memories! They shall not hold me back
Like clinging arms from the abyss of death,
Let death be what it may!

Here I hold
In my right hand the key to its mysteries.
This vial of dark fluid—spell of sleep
The last, the dreamless—pressed from poppy bloom,
This solves the doubt; *this* breaks the fever-dream;
This lays a palsyng spell on blood and limb
And burning brain, and lo, the wild dream is done,
Quenched in the Lethean flood of nothingness.
Scorn, poverty, cold, hunger are no more;
No more keen pangs when friends prove treacherous,
When even the last dumb friend forsakes.

Dance on,
Feast on. I shall not heed you now.
Stare at me, mystic Heaven, in cold rebuke.
Far, silent stars, what care you or your God
For human woe? Safe sits your God on high,
Tracing the shining paths of whirling worlds
And mighty systems, lighting up new suns.
What cares He for one burning human heart?

Yet he gives death. It is the best He gives.
For this I thank Him, and I greet thee, Death.
Dark essence of the poppy, kiss my lips
And steal their breath forever. Earth, farewell!

Ha! what is this! Who dares to grasp my arm?
Moro, my dog! Have you come back, my dog?
Come back from Athol's food and fire to *me*?
Why do you pluck my sleeve? What's this you've laid
Here at my feet? Why, bread! You've brought me
bread.

My poor dog! 'Twas for this you left me, then?
You sought to save me, and I thought—I thought—
Forgive me, Moro. I have wronged you, dog.
What if I have wronged my fellow-men as well!

And my starved dog, seeing his master's strait,
Stole in and begged the bread I could not ask,
And brought it here, despite his own sore need,
And bids me eat with eager, wagging tail
And wistful eyes! If there's such depth of love
And sacrificing pity in a brute,
Can man be wholly callous? I will hope.

My dog, you have saved me. I will live. Nay, more:
I will shake off this lethargy of despair,
This spell of the demon Drink that bade me drown
My woe in its cursed nepenthe. From this hour
That chain is broken. Faith and hope come back
Like a bright flood of sunshine. No, my dog,
Who would have died with me, you shall not starve:
Nor shall your trust be shamed. I'll win it back,
The crown I threw down in my fierce despair—
The crown of manhood—worth all crowns beside.

ANACREON.

Yon sea-like stretch of darkening pines
Is surging with the tempest's power,
And not one star of promise shines
Upon this twilight hour.
With wailing sounds the blast is rife,
And wilder yet the echoes roll
Up from the scenes where wo and strife,
Convulse the human soul.
'Tis madness rules the fateful hour,
Let me forget its saddening power;
Drop low the curtains of my room,
And in the rose and purple gloom,
Lose sight of angry men and stormy skies,
Gazing, Anacreon, on thy pictured eyes.

My grand old Greek! far back in time,
Thy glorious birth-hour lies:
Thy shade has heard the tread sublime
Of passing centuries;
And yet the soul that thrilled thy lyre
Has power to charm us still,
And with its vivid light and fire
Our duller spirits fill.
Breathe on me, Spirit, rare and fine,
Buoyant with energy divine;
The light, the joy of earlier days
Live in those blue eyes' dazzling rays;
They lift my soul from its confining cage,
The barriers of this dull and sordid age.

I dream I am a girl of Greece,
With pliant shape and foam-white arms,
And locks that fall in bright release
To veil my bosom's charms.
The skies of Greece above me bend,
The Egean winds are in my hair,
I hear glad songs and shoutings send
Their music on the air.

I see a gay procession pass:
The girls throw garlands on the grass,
And crowned with myrtle and with bay,
I see thee tread that flowery way,
While swim before me, smiling fields and skies.
Dimmed by a glance from thy resplendant eyes.

Prince of the lyre, thy locks are white
As Blanc's untrodden snow;
But quenchless in its warmth and light,
Thy blue eye beams below;
Love's myrtle twines thy bays among,
For love is thine in sooth;
The lips that have his praises sung
Are touched with deathless youth.
The bard dwells, aye, in springtime land,
Where Innocence and Passion stand—
Ardent, yet pure, clasped hand in hand;
And years but add a richer grace,
A subtler charm to mind and face;
While Youth and Beauty—which his dreams eclipse—
Bend to the magic of his tender lips.

Oh! heart of love and soul of fire,
My spirit bows to thee,
Type of the ideals that inspire
My dreams eternally.
I'd be a slave to such as thou,
And deem myself a queen,
If sometimes to my kneeling brow
Those perfect lips might lean.
High hopes and aims within my breast,
Would spring from their despairing rest,
And the wild energies that sleep,
Like prisoned genii, would outleap,
And bid my name among the immortals shine
If fame to me could mean such love as thine.

“BEAUTIFUL FLOWER.”

The Indians of the Tuscarora Tribe gave the name, “Beautiful Flower,” to Mrs. Erminnie Smith, the scientific explorer, whom the Smithsonian Institute had sent among the Indian tribes of the West to compile a dictionary of the Aborigines language, and to study the traits, habits and peculiarities of the Six Tribes. This little poem was written for the memorial volume, published in Boston, by Lee & Shephard, on the anniversary of the death of this brilliant and beloved woman.

Spring comes to wake the earth from winter sadness,
To quicken too our memory of One
Whose Spirit of electric life and gladness
Shone on us with an influence like the sun.

A Spirit that Death's cloud too quickly shaded,
Though but to us it suffered an eclipse,
For us—awhile—her tender smile has faded
And hushed the music of her eloquent lips.

A soul like her's we know must be eternal,
Strong to inspire, and quick to thrill and warm;
It still must live—whether on shores supernal
Or re-incarnate in some noble form

We cannot know; our souls thrill with emotion
And yearnings high, yet lie we on Time's shore,
Shut in this mortal shell, while the great ocean
Of Mystery pulses round us evermore.

But even here her spirit is immortal:
It echoes like sweet music through our days;
It beckons to us from some mystic portal
Through which stream on us broader, purer rays.

It still sounds for us the key-note of her spirit—
Love for all things—love strong to help and save—
Love even for the sad races that inherit
Defeat and shame far by the Western wave.

O deathless soul of love, and fire, and beauty,
Who faded from our sight one day in spring,
As that sad day rolls round our loving duty
Bids us dear memories and fresh flowers to bring

Votive to you; the thought of you comes o'er us
Sweet as a breath of perfume mixed with song;

Blown from some tropic island where a chorus
Of song and sweetness breathes the whole year
long—

And all life's little cares fade in a vision
Of vast wide splendor, safe from all eclipse,
Where bright we see your face in light elysian
And catch the smile of your sweet, tender lips.

TOO LATE.

Believe me, I have read the stars aright.
Never, beloved, shall our two lives unite,
Never, while roses bloom or northers blight.

But do not murmur; bow the head to fate.
The bar seems slight to you, strong, passionate;
But it is iron; we have met too late.

Too late for any linking of our lives or lips.
On life's wide waste, we are but passing ships,
Or planets, whose conjoining brings eclipse.

Yet send one ray to me, my spirit's star;
Waft me a breath, oh! spicy sails afar—
Across the dreary waves and stormy bar.

Such warmth, such balm shall be as sun and dew
To every blossom, whether of rose or rue
My life may bear, I'll owe my best to you.

HIGH AND LOW.

A STORY OF LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN.

Spring's touch had bade the valley thrill,
But on the heights 'twas winter still.
To-day, a warmer breath brought dreams
Of music to the melting streams,
And blurred the sky with vapors dim,
Till clouds lay sleeping on its rim.
Waking they spread wide wings of gloom;
And soon the thunder's heavy boom
Startled the air.

“Ah! from the tomb
Of Spring at last has rolled the stone.
She is set free, in loosened zone,
To dance down to her waiting throne—

Down on the silver stairs of Rain.”
I said to one I stood beside;
Then saw his eyes were dark with pain,
His lips were closely pressed to hide.

I knew his mood; I did not speak;
The lightning played upon his cheek;
Turning, he said, the Thunder's bell
From yon cloud-turret—'twas a spell—
A ghost it summoned—! No, 'tis not
A story worth the while to tell;

A rift in boyhood's cloudy lot
That darkened soon; 'twas half forgot;
That peal has rent the mists away
And flashed it back, fresh as that day—
Ten years ago—a day like this.
The valley blushed with Spring's first kiss;
The heights, yet clothed in winter snow,
Stood cold and white against the glow
Of Sun-set, where a wealth of cloud
Darkened, as now, for Evening's shroud.

She had climbed the heights; upon a ledge
Of jutting rock, at its sheer edge,
Stood her lone figure, dark and slight,
Against the sky's red, stormy light.
So lost in thought, she saw not me,
As stealing from a cedar tree,
I crept so near, a curl was blown
Back from her cheek and brushed my own.

Sudden, the storm-god's cloudy tent
By Lightning's fiery sword was rent.
A deep peal awed the world of white
And echoed from each solemn height.
She started at the burst of sound;
Close at her feet the treacherous ground
Gives way; and crashes down the steep;
But she is safe—safe in the round
Of my strong arms. I hold her there,
My cheek against her silken hair,

One breathless moment; then she stands,
Erect and pale; her trembling hands
Fling back the cloud of loosened hair;
Her proud lips shape: "How did you dare?"
Her eyes a gentler speech declare.
The blood to her white cheek springs warm;
 She murmurs thanks and speeds away;
Is it to 'scape the gathering storm,
 Or stormy words my lips might say?

"And you never said them?"

 No; not I.

They were exhaled in one bitter sigh,
I was lowly and she was high—
 As they sung last night at the 'Pinafore';
I plowed the fields of her father's lands—
 She could watch me from her mansion's door—
Work's hard callouses marked *my* hands,
 Her fingers sparkled with jeweled bands.

But the years bring changes, and to-day
 She would not hold it shame, I think,
That her head on my breast one moment lay,
 When I snatched her from the crumbling brink.
I have won a name—so the world will say,
 As in this free land a strong will may."

“ And she—have you seen her ? ”

“ Yes ? last night

She sang in the chorus. All in white,
Like an angel, but no angel she ;
The painted cheek, the restless eye,

They told a story sad to me.

(In the midst of the mirth you heard me sigh)
I thought of the proud old father, dead,
The home in ruins, the riches fled ;
The daughter wed where her heart was not,
Hating her poverty-narrowed lot ;
Flying at last to ease and shame,
Lured by a treacherous passion-flame,
To hear through remorseful years the cry
Of the little child she had left to die—

I heard that cry through the opera's trill—
But I swear, though I met her conscious eye,
And saw her smile till my blood ran chill,
I never recalled the moment when

I held her close on the snowy hill,
While the Spring's first lightning lit the glen,
No—not till now, when that thunder's bell
Summoned it up, like a wizard's spell ;
Do you wonder it seemed to me a knell ? ”

MY LOVE AND MY LADY.

Filled to the brim with mystical wine
Is the silver bowl of the moon tonight,
 Filled to the brim,
 And from its rim
Spills over a stream that is wonderful-bright.
I can count my lady's gems by its light,
The diamonds that heave on her bosom white,
 And circle her fingers slim.

From her brimful cup the summer moon
Poured out, one year ago,
 Her mystic wine
 Of the rare white shine,
Like a summer dream of the snow.
 And we sat in the gleam
 Of its tender stream,

My love, with the face like a flower of June,
My love and I in the meadow sweet,
And the grasses caressed her little feet,
And the cricket sung her a tune.

Oh! true little heart that beat so high,
How could I work you ill?

 Lips once a-thrill,
 Why are you still

Cold, cold to my passionate cry ?

“Forgive, forgive.” Ah, the winds go by,
Whispering “too late” to my pleading sigh—
 Go by to the grave on the hill.

Pour your wine, your mystical wine,
Oh, Moon of the summer night!
On my lady's brow of the marble fine,
On my lady's hair of the gold star-shine,
And her breast with gems bedight.

But sweeter—oh, saintly Nun of the night!—
Sweeter, I know, from your urn of light,
Will drop your wine
Like tears divine
In the cups of the daisies that make so white
A grave that lies on yon lonesome height—
My sad heart's secret shrine.

THE BRIDGE OF ASPHODELS.

A Dream-spirit bent o'er my couch last night,
And stole with its witchery, my soul away ;
Through my lips half-parted it took its flight,
As a bee escapes from a blossom of May.

Away through the fields of cerulean space,
Where the clustering planets like lilies shine,
Went that silent Dream with the tender face,
Hand in hand, with this soul of mine.

'Till she paused on the archway of pale asphodels,
Which the darksome gulf of mortality spans,
Where souls are carried in slumber's spells
To hold in brief visions the angels' hands.

And to meet for a while with the loved and the lost,
On that shadowy bridge where strange lights are
a-gleam,

Strange echoes afloat, while each newly-made ghost
Glides noiselessly over the mute-flowing stream.

But I heard not the music, that faint and afar,
Came like audible fragrance from Heaven's fair
shore ;

And I saw not the halo like mist 'round a star,
That was wreathing and floating around and before.

For my spirit met yours on that far away spot,
My hand thrilled in yours, as in meetings of yore;
I knew by your smile that I was not forgot,
And what asked I, or hoped I, or cared I for more?

THE LAST PLEDGE.

“ Pledge me in death's black wine.”—OLD BALLAD.

The tide of the river flows dark as death,
Where these shelving banks the rays eclipse;
The winds in the laurels hold their breath,
The dead sleep yonder in marble crypts ;
(Cold in the silence of hoary shade).

The roar of the distant city's tide
Is drowned in the sound of the hoarse cascade;
The sunset's pageant—purple, wide,

Rests on the rim of yon pine-clad hill.

Turn your face to its solemn light
And say—do you dare this glass to fill
And bid me drink to our parting night ?

Here, as we stand on this shelving rock,
While the river below with greedy lips
Gurgles for joy that a step or a shock
Would send us down to its black eclipse ;
With the dead back there. and the sunset here,
And the deep death tempting me down below ;
Do you dare with never a prayer or a tear
To say “ We are parting—I must go.
There is another claims my life—
A love that is fruitful as summer rain ;
Ours is barren and marred with strife,
Dashed with fever and crossed with pain ;
Forget it ; sing the songs of your land,
Soaring soul that I’ve held for an hour
Like a wild bird shut in my prisoning hand,
I loose you : go, with your glorious dower.”

• You can say this with your lips, your eyes,
That hold all the light of the world for me ?
Well, there’s no call for reproach or for sighs ;
They would but weary you : let it be.
I drink to the end of the dream, but stay !
Let me look once more on you, beautiful dream ;
Eyes of the twilight’s mystical gray,
Locks like the sunlit forest stream,

Mouth—oh sweetest and cruelest mouth !

Where did you learn that subtle art,
To smile with the tenderness of the South,
To curl with scorn that must break the heart ?
Press no kisses on mine proud lip ;

My heart aches full of their memory now,
And I must smile as I lightly sip

This wine of parting. Never a vow
This parting breaks : there was never a pledge
To bind us—only love flowed free
As the river under this dizzy ledge
And so free are you, of all claim from me.

And I ?—oh yes ; I am free : the bird

You held in your hand, you have loosed, you say
To soar and sing as of old and be heard

Above love's mists in a higher day.
Ah me ! The shape of the wing—and the song
Have been molded too long by that prisoning hand ;
Freedom is idle and life is long,

And death is a spring in a desert land,
Sweeter to fevered lips than wine ;

So I will not drink yours, I pour it down,
Amber-bright in the sunset-shine,
Into the waters. Do not frown.

I will pledge goodbye in a costlier drink,
Steeped in Nepenthe's poppied spell,
Dipped from a darker river's brink ;

For I could not lose you and live—farewell.

FLIGHT SOUTHWARD.

Our sunshine *all* must go
 With you, who soon will be
In a land where never the snow
Chills the sweet winds that blow
 Fresh from the kiss of the sea.
Warm be the skies that shall fold
You with their blue and their gold,
Though you leave us the gloom and the cold.

Go where the sunlit waves
 Are opaline like your eyes ;
Your tropical nature craves
The sunshine that soothes and saves,
 The loveliness soft as sighs.
Their spells may still the unrest
That beats its wings in your breast.

Go to the land of the sun,
 Thou of the summer-soul,
When our days are dim and dun,
We will trust that yours are spun
 Of the Parcae's sunniest gold.
When the birds fly South through the blue,
We will waft them a message for you.

A ROSE IN MY NEIGHBOR'S GARDEN.

Sweet, fresh Rain, light-fingered Rain,
That tapped last night at my window pane ;
You are my friend : you have loosed apart
The green swathes binding my rose's heart—
My rose, yes mine by a poet's right
As the stars are mine on the crest of night.
It blossoms across my neighbor's fence,
He may sell it to-day for so many pence—
Tear it away from its swaying throne,
Yet the rose is mine—my very own,
Mine in its crown of splendid bloom,
Its diamond rain, its sweet perfume.

“ One kiss, my beauty,” I say, “ and part,”
As I pass on my way to the dusty mart,
But I carry off, embalmed in my heart,
All this color and fragrance and grace
To brighten and sweeten my thoughts apace,
So you are mine, you marvelous thing ;
To me is the comforting message you bring
From the rain, the sun and the sweet, kind earth—
First mother, who brooded over your birth—
As over mine; last mother too,
Who shall take us soon to her bosom true ;
But we shall have lived in this wonderful world,
Have seen the sunset's banners unfurled,
Have felt the sunshine and drank the rain,
And given what we could to the world again,
So my rose, we shall not have lived in vain.

NIGHT BEFORE THE EXECUTION.

She stands upon the dungeon floor,
Swathed in her night-black hair.
She does not pray, she does not weep,
Despair is still when it is deep
And knows not moan or prayer.

She dares not move her fettered feet
To stamp in frenzy's might;
She fears the clanking chain to hear;
It rouses phantoms full of fear
In the dead, silent night.

So, mute and motionless she stands,
But through her fevered brain
The thronging memories go and come,
Unshadowed by the pall of doom,
Untainted by the dungeon gloom—
A bright, but mocking train.

In gorgeous pleasure-halls she seems
To sweep, a festal queen;
White curves her proud neck, jewel-bound,
Dark wreathes her tresses, plume encrowned,
Stately yet soft her mien.

Gems clasp the arm's unsullied snow
That rusty chains now hide;
And *he* had clasped them, kneeling low,

With the fond grace she learned to know
And watch for with a guilty glow—
She, she another's bride.

His rare, soft eyes ! a serpent guile
In their dark shadow lay,
Subtle in beauty, strong in power,
It watched for her unguarded hour
And made her life its prey.

She gave him all that woman can—
Surrendered him her soul ;
She would have walked with him through hell,
Nor heard the tortured spirits yell,
Led by his presence-mastering spell
And passion's wild control.

She had done for him—what ? Oh, God!
The haunting vision comes!
She sees the dead, the murdered dead,
With livid, poison hues o'erspread!
His kind, true lips, his hoary head—
How plain the specter looms!

Just heaven, the horror of that look!
Calm, sad, but stern as fate ;
She feels that it foretells the doom
That, past the scaffold, past the tomb,
Stares at her from Hereafter's gloom,
And ever moans " Too late!"

She can not bear it ; she must scream
Though all the fiends awake ;
No, it is gone ! it leaves her now
With the cold sweat upon her brow
And limbs that cramp and quake.

Deep silence fills the freezing cell ;
Not even her pulses stir.
Hark ! what faint sound falls on her ear !
The note of the far chanticleer,
Crying, " The morning laugheth near,"
What brings that day to her ?

That awful day that comes—her last !
Horror congeals her blood.
A vision of that day appears,
A sea of faces turns to hers ;
And what is this that clasps, that stirs ?
The rope—the rope—oh, God !

It tightens, chokes ! No, it is but
A coil of clammy hair ;
She flings it like a serpent off,
But still she hears the crowd's deep scoff,
Still those dark ranks appear.

A thousand cold, unpitying eyes
Turn to her standing there,
Intent to see the fatal rope
Throttle the struggling life and hope,
And swing the soul beyond the scope
Of earth and time—oh ! where ?

She starts—amid that sea-like throng

One face a frenzy brings.

He comes to gloat on her despair,

His look, his scorn she will not bear ;

Forward she springs to curse him there.

Her footing fails, black grows the air!

Just Heaven! she swings, she swings!

* * * * *

She falls upon the dungeon floor

In deep and deadly swoon ;

The night's wild dreams and fears are o'er

Would she might lie there overmore,

Nor wake for sun or moon!

But she will wake from that brief rest

To hear the hammer's sound

Upon her scaffold's lofty height.

And she will go, all cold and white,

And act the vision of to-night

Before the gazing crowd.

THE WOMAN DOCTOR.

In the pretty town of Somers

We were just installed—new-comers,

When my darling sister Sue—

Girl as lovely as she's true—

Fell a victim to the fever,

Gripping her as a retriever

Grips his game. *It wouldn't leave her.*

Her physician—one called Proctor—
Was a grim and surly doctor ;
His eyes were red and bleary,
And his breath was always beery ;
Though he gave her draught and pill,
Sue grew weak and weaker still,
Going gradually downhill.

Till at last I said to Proctor :
“ You shall no more play the doctor
To my sister ; you have mocked her
Go, you drunken Esculape,
Ere I take you by the nape ;
Take your form from off our door,
And return there—nevermore.”

To the servant then I said :
“ Bring a man here with a head,
Bring me straight a new physician.”
He departed on his mission.
When he came next to our door,
“ Here,” he said, “ is Dr. Moore.”
By the gods it was a woman!
Had it been a thing unhuman
I could not have stared more wildly—
But the woman took it mildly.
Woman! she was but a girl
With a brow of purest pearl,
Not a bang, though, not a curl;
Straight, serene and calmly serious,

With a look a bit imperious,
As without blush or demur,
"Show me to the patient, Sir,"
Said this most surprising vision,
This sweet, stately girl-physician.

I felt snubbed ; I put on airs, .
Stiff as deacons at their prayers ;
But she little heeded me ;
With a bow, slight as could be,
She passed on, leaned over Sue,
Bent on her those eyes of blue.
Talked so wisely and so true,
With such calm self-confidence,
So much modesty and sense,
So much science and such kindness,
That I felt I'd been in blindness
Scorning women who had missions
To be lawyers or physicians,
As though sex should ever ban
Women any more than man
From just doing what they can.
Then my sister—she got well,
But—I grieve the tale to tell,
I am now more truly ill—
Past the help of draught or pill,
And unless this fair M. D.,
This most potent. magic "*She*,"
Shall my fevered pulses still,
By one word's sweet whispered thrill,
Why, this *heart* complaint will kill.

THE AVENGING GHOST

They were two brothers, dwelling by the sea
In an old mansion, hoary with long years ;
Shadowed by dark old cedars, facing cliffs
That jutted sheer to the green, foaming waves
Breaking against their base. They were the last
Of a proud race, save an old gray-haired sire,
And they three dwelt in that old sea-beat home;
They—and one other—a sweet orphan girl,
Willowy and tall, with the dark eyes and hair
Of her dead mother—she whom the old man
Had loved in youth and who had left her child,
When she lay dying, to his faithful care.
Her trust was well fulfilled; the girl had grown
To womanhood with scarce a care to cloud
Her lovely brow, save some sweet yearning for
The sympathy and presence of her sex.
Carlyon and Vance had been to her for long
Only as brothers ; till one fateful day,
When she had been in peril of her life,
On a lone sand bar that the rising tide
Threatened to whelm with her—(her skiff being gone.)
Each brother in his boat rowed for dear life,
To reach her ere the waves rose to her lips ;
And Carlyon reached her first. and gathering her
In his impassioned arms pressed kisses warm—
Too warm for a brother—on her trembling mouth.
And Vance looked on, a darkness on his brow,

A gleam, like sullen lightning, in his eye;
And from that hour, fraternal love was turned
To hate and jealousy, though he kept it locked
Deep in his breast, and brooded on it there,
And gave no sign, even when the wedding-day
Drew close at hand.

It came at last.

The brothers both set forth on the calm bay
To bring the priest from the village, whose white spires
Were traced on the blue sky. The day was calm,
But nursed on its hot breast a storm that woke
Near sunset, with an eye of flame, a breath
That tossed the waters. From her balcony,
In her white bride-dress, Elan stood and watched,
Anxious yet not distressed; she knew how well
The two could cleave the billows in their boat
With sinewy arms and skillful oars. She stood
Till fell the twilight, then the boat came back,
But not the bridegroom ; he, alas ! was drowned,
Had perished in the capsizing of the boat.
So said his brother ; and he was believed ;
There was none to gainsay his word ; the priest,
Scared at the storm, had shaken his hoary head
And muttered 'twas too ominous a day
For a bridal.

Ah, the young bride's grief,
The old father's anguish ! Carlyon was his pride.
And Vance was wild-eyed, ghastly as the corpse
The cruel waves cast on the shore next day.

Deep gloom settled upon the dreary house
Hid in the cedar shades ; the billows' moan
Was echoed drearily from Elan's lips.

But time will pass a healing hand o'er wounds,
However deep. As months and months went on
Vance dared to speak his love ; his father urged
Elan to take on her the nearer tie,
And so, once more a wedding-day broke clear,
And Vance and Elan sat upon the porch
In the soft twilight ; round her slender waist
His arm had stolen, and he drew to his
Her passive lips. No passionate joy was hers—
Her heart was buried in that sea-washed grave.
But *he* was all a-throb with burning love
And restless, feverish triumph, and he drank
The wine of that sweet kiss with eager lips,
Murmuring : " My own—" but suddenly broke off,
Turned ghastly—trembled like a storm-blown reed,
And started from her. " What is it ? " she cried,
In her amaze. " Do you not see ? Look there !
Look at his dead-white face—his dripping hair ;
And yet his eyes are wide ; they gaze at me,
Oh, God ! with just that look of wild, sad pain
And deep reproach as when I thrust him down,
Back in the water with the oar that struck
The fatal blow ; there is its bloody mark !
Do you not see ? Just God ! he beckons me ;
He points out to the sea—yes, I will go—
There is no help ; no rest ; I've fought it long.
The bride I've sinned for never shall be mine."

With these wild words, he rushed straight to the cliff,
And flung himself sheer from its beetling brow
Down in the boiling, rock-tormented waves.
The will of Him who said "Vengeance is Mine"
Had been fulfilled once more upon the Earth.

WINTER RAIN.

The rain drips sullenly from the eaves ;
But far—on the bed of fallen leaves,
It falls with a cheering, musical sound
As it called to a spirit under the ground,
To the waiting soul of the April flowers,
Which the dead leaves hide from the winter hours.
Under the brown leaves, sodden and dead,
Sleep the violets, safe in their bed ;
All the rain and snow that we rue
Will only deepen their hearts of blue
When the Spring shall kiss them, warm and true.

Best beloved, in whose violet eye
I have watched the sunshine die,
Under the dead and sorrowful years
You buried your heart with slow, sad tears ;
But I hear a voice that my soul believes
In the sound of the rain upon the leaves ;
Under the dead years' winter gloom
The violet, love, still lives—to bloom.

MYRRHA, THE GREEK BRIDE

THE Moslem's evening call to prayer
No longer clove the echoing air.
The sunset's purple citadel
Dissolved as at some silent spell
Into a fairy sea of rose,
Through which the star of evening grows
As some white lily in a lake,
Whose dreaming waters never wake.

The mosques and minarets that rose
Against that sky of calm repose
Show darker, and more gloomy falls
The shadow of the palace walls
Across the dark Bosphorus tide
That laves the palace's marble side—
Palace, whose guarded walls shut in
So much magnificence and sin.
Darkening and motionless it lay
Upon the calm, upheaving bay,
Till, in a breath, 'tis broken. Swift,
But noiseless as a leaf may drift,
A boat, swan-breasted, shoots inside
The shadow-outline streaming wide.
Close to the wall it presses ; where
A slender balcony, carved and fair,
Juts high above ; it pauses there ;
The boatman rises ; nobler shape

The Turkish mantle may not drape ;
Those limbs were worthy knightly mail,
That turbaned brow so proud and pale
Were better helmeted ; the fire
In those gray eyes is from the pyre
Of joy consumed—a burning ire
Beneath the ashes of keen pain.
He stands a moment—then a strain
Escapes his lips—a Turkish air,
Low sung but marvelous sweet and clear.
It floats up to the palace walls,
And on the wondering ear it falls
Of one who on a divan lies
With weary anguish in her eyes,
Mocking the roses in her hair,
The pearls that make her neck more fair,
The robe, whose gem-embroidered zone
Only a favored slave may own ;
She hears that song in Turkish sung,
But that was never Turkish tongue ;
'Tis the Greek accent ; quick the blood
Stains her white cheek—shame's burning flood.
Oh, wild despair—that song, that air,
She would fly from it—did she dare !
But still its music chains her ear.

“Myrrha, the sun has left the sky,
Come with the light of thy dark eye,
Come, oh, come.

Myrrha, there's sorrow in the sea,
I want thy voice's melody ;
Come with thy tones, the pure, the free,
And bid these maddening visions flee,
Come, oh, come."

Yes, it is his, 'tis Otho's voice.
Once it had made each pulse rejoice,
But now !—Yet still her step it draws
Out to the balcony—there, a pause—
One quick look down, her eager eyes
Have pierced at once the Turk's disguise.
Whiter she grows beneath his gaze—
Her young Greek lover of old days—
Days ere the Turk's red, pitiless hand
Had torn her from her native land,
The blazing ruins of her home,
And caged her here, beneath this dome,
That is to her a living grave,
To be the Sultan's toy and slave,
To bear caresses from the hand
Red with the life-blood of her land ;
To feel that hand's relentless power
Closing around her hour by hour,
Despite her prayers and struggles, till
It crushes hope and strength and will,
And leaves her like a dove whose wings
Scarce shudder in the serpent's rings.

Ah ! who that comes within these walls,
Where subtle sin enwinds, enthralls,
Where music, perfume, luxury all
Bear the lulled spirit to its fall,
Where the drugged cup that white hands fill
Is handmaid to the tyrant's will,
While subtler poison steeps the mind—
“ Who enters here, leaves hope behind.”

Her life within these walls !—in gleams
It flashes on her like the dreams
Born of wine-fevered blood, and brings
A stab of keenest shame ; she wrings
Her jeweled hands, “ Why came you here ?”
She falters with white lips ; and clear
The answer floats up to her ear :
“ I came to find you and to save.”
“ Too late—you find me in my grave.
Dead to myself, to Greece, to you,
It is too late to chide or sue,
Go, leave me to my doom ; the air
Is full of danger, heed my prayer
And fly at once ; even now some spy
May mark you with his deadly eye
A victim for the Sultan's power ;

“ Go.” “ Not without you. Oh ! my flower,
The storm has stained, my bird whose breast
The tiger's claw has torn ; attest,
Ye listening stars, that rather I

Would brave the tyrant's rage and die
Than leave her whom I loved in youth,
Whom still I love through wrong and ruth,
Whose stains my lips shall kiss away,
Whose wrongs my sword with blood shall pay
When dawns that now impending day
That whelms the Turk in bloody fray."

He pleaded, while the light grew pale
And glimmered on his far-off sail,
Pleaded till to her eyes there came
A flash of hope's long-quenched flame
Shining albeit through a tear.
She spoke: "At midnight, then, be here,
And I will come—but oh, I fear
The most for you. Greece claims your life,
Let her, not Myrrha, be your wife,
Unworthy—" "Hush," he cried. "'tis well,
'Tis promised ; when the midnight bell
Sounds its first stroke I will be nigh
To save you or with you to die."

* * * * *

The night is dark, the moon is new,
Yet Otho to his trust is true.
His boat waits by the palace wall,
His ear has caught a light footfall,
A murmured word, his heart grows warm,
His arms upreach to clasp the form
He sees from out the casement swing.

Why does it's touch a shudder bring ?
He folds it in a quick embrace,
His warm lips press the unanswering face
So cold— ! He tears the hood away,
The form he holds is senseless clay.
The staring eyes, the parted lips
Show life has suffered fierce eclipse
By murderer's hand ; the pearls still deck
In milky loveliness her neck ;
But what is this—that tighter yet
Clasps the round throat ? with blood 'tis wet !
The fatal bow-string ! Ah, just Heaven !
He knows by whom her doom was given ;
The despot's spies had seen, had heard !
With madness all his soul is stirred ;
Seizing the rope that lowered the dead,
He scales the wall ; the turbaned head
Of mocking watcher cleaves he there
With his strong arm and saber bare.
They fly in fear, he follows fast,
The hall of royal state is passed,
The Sultan's chamber reached at last ;
But at its door a hireling horde
With thickset bayonets guard their lord ;
And Otho, pierced by many a blade,
Falls ere his full revenge is stayed—
Falls in the blood his sword has made.

And the Bosphorus moans above
The young Greek soldier and his love.

FOREVER.

We met, it was when laughing Spring
Her earliest wreath was twining,
When birds were out on dewy wing,
And skies were blue and shining.

I little recked of sunny skies,
Or April bloom beguiling;
My sunshine was your radiant eyes,
My spring your tender smiling.

I said to Fate: "I will not fear
Your voice of cruel scorning."
I said to Memory;" "Droop not here
Your raven wing of warning.

"Some days must be for you and me:
Some nights all wild and lonely;
But *now*, I bid you shadow flee,
This hour is Love's, Love's only."

Alas! I heard upon the hill
Fate's low defiant laughter,
Ah, felt you not my heart grow still,
My lips grow cold thereafter?

I saw and knew it for a sign,
The breezeless poplar quiver,
And felt, even with your heart to mine,
We had met to part forever.

Dear love, the saintly sages tell
A wild and wondrous story,
That death shall not the spirit quell,
Nor quench its fadeless glory.

I need not these, for in my soul,
A prophet voice is telling
That love knows never earthly goal,
Nor ever earthly knelling.

Beyond the stars, whose silver feet
O'er heaven's blue pathway quiver,
In some fair Aiden we shall meet,
Who have parted here forever.

THE UNDYING ONE.

Cursed with a deathless life,
Doomed to see centuries go by,
As clouds across an autumn sky ;
Through famine, plague and strife
To pass unscathed—loathing the boon of breath
And vainly longing for the peace of death.

Without a hope or aim
To wander—driven through every land
By an unseen, remorseless hand ;
And—horror without name !—
To have the groans of pain echo his tread,
And ghastly Plague walk in his footsteps, dread.

Upon the battle plain
Amid the slayers and the slain,
Through flashing swords and cannon's rain
To seek for death in vain ;
The mystic mark, Cain-like, upon his brow,
Wards off the hand that lays his comrades low.

Coldly he looks on all
The pomp and pageantry of earth ;
The fate of nations and the birth
Of empires doomed to fall,
Swept like dead leaves from a wind-shaken limb,
But what have time and change to do with him ?

Erect and pale and proud ;
The beauty of his kingly race
Throned on his brow of haughty grace :—
His stately form unbowed ;
Yet what avails—when Love instinctive flies,
From the stern sorrow of those changeless eyes ?

Will it be thus for aye ?
Oh ! will not God remove his ban
Of vengeance from this haunted man ?
Must he endure alway
This living death ? or will the pitying tomb
At last be opened for the child of doom ?

“ Tarry until I come ”
On that foretold and longed-for hour
When the Messiah comes in power,
And to their long-lost home—
Their own Jerusalem’s ancient, hallowed walls—
The scattered tribe of princely Judah calls.

Then, then the curse shall cease ;
The weary march from shore to shore
With death and plague shall be no more ;
The prayed-for rest and peace
Shall settle on those eyes, too sad for tears,
Dark with the shadows of two thousand years.

LILLIAN'S PIGEONS.

Just where the wood comes down to kiss the meadow
And fling across its bloom a loving shadow,
Is Lillian's dove cote, hidden in the beeches,
In which green fane, Sir Fan Tail sits and preaches,
All day long the sweet lesson: "Life is love;
The world is fair, the skies are blue above,
The grass seed very good, the brook-water sweet,
And she, the maid who comes with tripping feet
To bring our breakfast, she has eyes as blue
As wind-flowers, flossy curls in hue
Like the corn tassels when the autumn's new.
I love to peck her pretty finger tips,
As pink as apple buds—and then her lips !
What, Silver Throat ; you're ruffling neck and wing !
Jealous of Lillian, are you ?—foolish thing !
She's but a girl ; she cannot fly, or make
A nest like ours, not for her dear life's sake,
So pray be sensible. Recollect next week
You'll hatch a nest full—time to be more meek
And matronly, *I* think. She's almost due ;
It's sunrise. Ah, through clover blooms and dew
She comes with breakfast ; and I'm hungry, too."

IN ANOTHER STAR.

Sweet eyes, shy woodland eyes, like forest lakes
Brown-tinged with dropping leaves, I would not stir
Your pure tranquillity if I could. I know
The breathing roses of those perfect lips
Are not for me. I know that closely locked
Is your true heart, and that one holds the key
Who feels, I trust, the worth of what he guards.
I shall not whisper through the key-hole—no.
But is it wrong to dream? I hope 'tis not;
For sometimes when I sit with my cigar
Wrapping me in its fragrant haze, a dream
Enfolds me too, and gazing far, far down
A shadowy vista, stretching past these shores,
I see your face, like a star, and close beside
I see my own; your eyes look into mine,
Your hands are prisoned in mine; your lips—
I'm talking wildly, but remember, dear,
This happened in some other star, long ere
We two were born into this meagre Earth!
Some bright, far star, where life was rich and sweet
And brimmed with beauty. *There* you were my own.
I watched each leaf of your white soul unfold,
Even as we watched the starry sea-flowers blow,
Sitting, hand clasped in hand, upon the shore
Of dim mysterious seas. We had no need
Of speech—no need—; there was a subtler way

For twin souls to commune in that sweet star.
Oh, those lost hours! The song, the light, the bliss
Transcending Earth's poor joys!

“A baseless dream?”

That may be, sweet; and yet, I swear, I have seen
Your soul look at me through those strange, deep eyes
With a gleam of recognition—just a gleam,
As when a flash breaks through Night's rayless arch,
And shows a world of clouds; thus did that look
Light up the vista of the past for me.
You will not grudge the dream; you have so much
Such a full cup of love, and I have but
This dim, sweet memory of that other life
When you were mine—as you may be again
When we drift past these shores and find our souls
In other life-seas.

A poor shadowy hope
To feed a sick heart on? I know it is.
But all my life is shadow-like, here alone
In this old house among the mountain pines,
Haunted with the ghosts of my dead ancestors,
Who died ere the warm youth cooled in their blood,
And lay in state in yonder gloomy room.
They tell me I am heir to my line's disease,
That it has seized the citadel of my life,
And flaunts its red flag on my wasted cheek.
'Tis well—this life has been a dreary boon;
I pray the next may be less bitter-bare,
However undeserved. 'Tis striking one,
And my cigar is out. Good night, sweet Dream.

CHILD MUSICIANS.

His yellow curls are blowing
In a tangle about his brow,
Weary and footsore and hungry,
He does not mind it now,
For under the cottage window
The mignonnette bloom is sweet;
Its breath and the dear old music
Drift his thoughts from the dusty street
To his home across the ocean,
On the banks of the murmuring Rhine.
He plays in a dream of "father-land,"
And his music is half divine.
He does not heed the clinking
Of the pennies as they fall,
It is practical, plump Bettina
Who stoops and gathers them all.
Staying her tamborine's tinkle,
And her lightly dancing feet,
Till she gathers the scanty manna
And curtesys, smiling sweet.
Oh, blue-eyed children of music,
Wanderers in stranger land,
May he who cares for the sparrows
Guide you with tenderest hand.

ON THE RUINED TOWER.

A PICTURE.

Alone she stands upon the heights that beetle
Above the valley steeped in sunset's fire,
Above the village where her life first opened,
Dear in each pointed roof and gleaming spire.
She stands upon the ivied ruins, hoary,
Of the old haunted tower—her trysting spot
In days when she had quaffed love's fateful sweetness,
But not its bitter dregs—to be forgot.

She looks her last upon her native valley,
The sadness of farewell in her dark eyes.
Her steps must turn beyond the mountain shadows;
New scenes, new hopes shall to her vision rise;
And work and fame—perchance—shall quench the
fever
That love and loss have kindled in her breast,
And give, what the lone heights, the pines' deep voices
Have failed to bring her—rest.

THE LONG LEAF PINE.

The pine, the long leaf pine!
It seemed a mystic shrine
In days no longer mine.

Rooted in sand where the gulf-billows foam,
Lifting a Doric shaft, a soaring dome,
In which a spirit sat that ceaselessly
Seemed uttering wierd prophecies to me,
As lying at its foot, gazing afar
Through its green dome at sky, or cloud, or star,
I heard in its wild strain the voice of Eld,
Solemn as though some Aztec prophet held
Mysterious worship in its lofty shrine;
Dark, spirit-haunted pine!

What dreams were built in those lost days for me,
By its wild harpings and the organ sea!
Dreams grand and sweet to one who knew not life,
Its sordid worships and its petty strife.
It seemed so easy to be noble then,
To win a height by magic of the pen,
Above Toil's dust and Passion's lion's den.
Only in books I knew the world of men—
Old books that lined his room, who was my priest,
My guide, my prophet. 'Twas my nightly feast,
Lying on the deep hearth-rug at his feet,
To read on, on, nor mark the hours how fleet,
Until he called—oh, voice so deep and sweet!

Only my kinsman? He was more to me!
My dream of manhood, beautiful and free.
All things seemed possible to him, whose dower
Was glorious genius. Could I guess what power
Had wound its serpent folds about him then
To drag him down—my eagle among men?
He of the knightly soul and burning pen,
And form that seemed the shrine
Of old-world grandeur, like to thine,
Oh, sad and stately pine.

Hush, hush thy song! no more, no more divine
Its breathings seem; the bead is off the wine;
The hours pass—no more with morning shine
Upon their rosy wings, but chill and slow
They drift to me like snow,
When skies hang dim and low.
They drift like snow, falling on lonely graves,
The burden of the pine and dark sea waves
Is now a prayer for rest,
For weary wing and breast.
Even in a broken nest.

Sing not of mysteries, oh! prophet pine;
My soul has knelt—in vain—at many a shrine
Has lifted many waters to its lips,
Thirsting for visions of apocalypse,
And tasted bitter brine;
While all the visions that once seemed so bright
Melted, like mirage, in the later light.

BLESSING.

"Heaven bless you," he murmured softly,
"Be happy, sweet friend, good bye;
And so in the waning summer
He left me with scarce a sigh.

"Heaven bless!" Ah! bitter mocking,
I know what it is to be blessed;
'Tis to sit all mute in his presence
By his tender eyes caressed.

Hearing the waves' low chiming,
Like bridal bells in a dream;
Forgetting the past that was dreary,
The future that had no gleam.

Afloat on the wave of the present,
Like a leaf on the tossing sea,
Watching his mouth's sweet smiling,
Though it never had kiss for me.

I asked but for his presence,
A smile, a glance, a word
Made my heart in its warped life-prison
Sing like an uncaged bird.

I craved but these for my blessing,
I asked not kiss or caress,
And these—they are mine, no longer;
What mockery to say, "Heaven bless."

HENRY W. GRADY.

If Death had waited till the grateful Land

He championed with his life had bent and crowned
With a proud civic garland of command

That knightly brow with laurels freshly bound!
But he cared not for crowns—this wrestler strong;
If down the arena swept some warm, wild breath
Of His people's praise—this bore his soul along—
This came with sweetness in the midst of death.

Ah! half her sun seems stricken from the South

Since he is dead—her tropic-hearted one.

Will the pomegranate flower's vivid mouth

Open to drink the dews when frost is done?

Will the gay redbird flash like winged flame,

The mocking-bird awake her thrilling lyre?

Will Spring and Song, will Love even seem the same,

Now he is gone, the spirit whose light and fire
And pulsing sweetness were like Spring to make
The old earth young? Will Light and Love awake
And he still sleep, while we weep for his sake?

THE FISHERMAN'S DAUGHTERS.

- "Hark! Meeta, how the sea sobs—
It moans like a dying child;
And the gulls fly low and shriek aloud,
And the sky grows yet more wild.
- "It was still awhile ago,
And the sea scarce drew its breath;
But now I hear afar the roar
Of the storm that threatens death.
- "And our father is gone in his boat.
Why would he go out to-day?
And why did he groan and mutter a curse,
And tear his locks of gray?
- "Sure he did not curse *you*, Meeta—
He always loved you so;
He said you'd a look of mother
In your eyes of star-like glow.
- "You weep, you tremble, my sister—
You are white as that foam-capped wave,
Which rolls in first to tell of the flood
That may be will be our grave.
- "It is not through fear you tremble—
Your heart is stout, I know.
When the good ship struck and parted,
And sunk in the billow's flow,

“ You launched the boat with father,
And you held a steady oar ;
And you saved the fair-haired stranger
And brought him with you to shore.

“ The smiling, sweet-voiced stranger—
He was beautiful as the day,
But I could not like him, Meeta—
I was glad when he went away ;

“ For I missed our old walks, sister,
On the shore with twilight dim ;
You walked our path of cedars,
But you went alone with him—

“ Not to the grave of our mother,
Where we used to go to pray,
I knelt there sad and lonely,
And prayed for you every day.

“ At last, in the purple summer,
The stranger sailed from shore,
And he kissed your lips and whispered
He would come back once more.

“ And you waited, watching seaward,
Day after day in vain,
With your face so white and anxious ;
He never came again.

“ You weave your rushen baskets
All day in the olden place,
And I see our father watch you,
With a shadow on his face.

“ And I pray for you in sorrow,
With a fear I can not speak,
For your eye grows wild and woful,
And a pallor blights your cheek.

“ What is it ails you, Meeta,
That it's so long since you've smiled ?
Tell your sister, your pet, your baby—
The Mabel you call your child ;

“ Tell me, and I will pray to Mary—”
“ Hush!—call not that holy name!
Child, what should you know of sorrow—
What should you know of shame ?

“ Poor child! by the innocent wonder
That looks from your wide, blue eyes,
I know you guess not the burden
That upon my spirit lies.

“ But pity me, pity me, Mabel,
For a storm rules in my heart
Fiercer than this wild tempest
Which tosses the boughs apart

“You remember that wild gray morning
After the Easter storm,
When we found in the Rocky Inlet
A naked human form—

“A corpse that the waves were tossing
On the sharp rocks to and fro,
While the sea mew shrieked above it
And the cormorant circled slow.

“Ever thus my soul is chafing
In a sea of bitter woe,
And remorse preys on it fiercely,
And shame swoops on it slow.

“He knew *all*, this wretched morning—
Our father old and gray,
And madly he faced the tempest
That was gathering over the bay.

“The look of his eyes will haunt me
In the regions of the lost,
As he stood, his gray locks blowing,
As pallid as any ghost.

“Kiss me once, my little sister—
Pray for my lost soul—pray.
I am going ; the storm is rising,
And dark shuts the lid of day.

“I shall find our father, and bear him
Over the breakers wild ;
In his old age one shall cheer him—
Mabel, his youngest child.

“Yonder my boat is rocking
Through the mists of driving rain ;
I go to save my father,
But I shall not come again.”

LOST IN THE CLOUDS.

“Almost ready,” they hear him say,
The daring rider of air and cloud ;
“Almost ready,” he calls to the crowd ;
“See the monster !” they cry aloud
“See her roll ; see her sway,
She tugs to get free—ah, soon, quite soon
We shall see her rise—the big balloon.”

With hand on the net of rope
That is holding his eager sky-ship down
The aeronaut stands ; from foot to crown
A being of life and hope.
He smiles on all—and on one most fair,
When—a jerk—a start—up in the air
Springs the balloon!—and he tangled there !

Caught in a coil, swings there,
Held fast as the monster springs on high—
He is free ! But to fall would be to die ;
 . So he clings in grim despair
To the ropes that save him from instant death ;
No hope of help from the crowd beneath ;
They can only shudder and hold their breath.

Up through the blue of June
Cleaving the winds in joyous strife,
Like a thing of wild defiant life
 Up springs the great balloon.
Faint come the cries of the crowd below,
Faint *her* shriek of frenzied woe,
Dim grows the earth in its summer glow.

Up, up, through the pathless air,
The winds go by with a mocking cry ;
The low sun glares with pitiless eye.,
 His lips can frame no prayer,
As he clings with quick and laboring breath
To the only bar between him and death.

Night—fearful night !—comes on,
And the moving clouds take ghost-like forms,
And hover around in darkening swarms ;
 But higher—and they are gone,
And the stars look down with cold, pale eyes,
And silence is wide as the boundless skies.

'Tis a fearful thing, I ween,
To float—a wreck—on a stormy sea,
While the breakers, muttering hoarse on the lea,
By the lightning's glare are seen ;
But oh! to be lost in a sea of air,
With no sound and no living creature there—
Alone, with a horrible despair!

Ha! what was that startled scream!
Just Heaven! is the longed-for earth so near,
That its blessed sounds may reach his ear?

Alas, for the transient dream!
An eagle with earth-damp wing flaps by
And turns and looks with a startled cry
At so strange a sight in the lonely sky.

Ay; scream in your fierce despair:
Cry to the bird that has swiftly flown,
Bid him not leave you, to die alone:
Then sob out a pitiful prayer,
For feebly your cold hands keep their clasp—
'Tis death that is loosening their frenzied grasp.

* * * * *

Down, down like a wounded bird,
Wavers now the shrunk balloon,
Past is the brief, brief night of June,
Day dawns, but it brings no hopeful boon.
And his pulse is scarcely stirred
At sight of the beautiful earth once more,
The woods, the lake with its emerald shore.

For hope and strength are done,
He looses his hold, with a prayer for rest ;
He drops down, down to the lake's blue breast,
While rises the gladdening sun.
A splash—that startles the sleeping crane—
Then the waters close ; it is still again.

LOVE'S WISH.

Would I were only a spirit of song;
I'd float forever around, above you.
A musical spirit could never do wrong,
And it would'nt be wrong to love you.

Would I were only a beautiful dream,
I'd seek you out, I never could miss you;
While you slept I would come on a stray moonbeam,
And—would it be wrong to kiss you?

Would I were only the soul of a rose—
That your hand might pluck in the dewy even.
To breathe myself out where your lips uncloze,
Or your pure heart throbbed were heaven.

A NIGHT WATCH.

Alone with night and silence and those strange,
Wide, yet unseeing, sleepless eyes, whose depths
I have searched vainly many days and nights
For some faint gleam of consciousness, some ray
Of tender recognition to break forth—
Sudden and starlike from the vacant cloud.
It does not come. The sweet soul that looked forth
From those deep eyes wanders mysteriously
In some dim land that borders upon death.

The roses of the perfect May breathe out
Their souls of perfume underneath the moon;
Hid in young leaves the mocking bird, half wakes,
Utters his passionate dream in song, and sleeps.
Voice, breath and beauty of the mystic Night!
And yet they thrill no chord in all my being.
What is it to me how many roses scent
The dewy night—since mine lies crushed and pale?
One broken utterance from these lips whereon
Cruel paralysis—that death in life—
Has laid its seal, were worth to me tonight
The music of the spheres.

My child, my boy,
In whose large eyes I dreamed that genius slept,
For whose broad brow I fondly twined the bays
That I had ceased to strive for—my fair flower

That came when life was parched and desert-like,
And brought the balm of hope; alas ! what dreams
Of future greatness has my fancy built,
As kneeling by you sleeping, I stroked back
The curls from your white temples.

Well I knew
My life had failed; the aspiring hopes that soared
Too early, had dropped chilled and wounded back,
Checked by the iron hand of circumstance
Which fetters woman's life; but you, I said,
No robes of womanhood could trip your steps
Upon the mountain paths of fame, my boy,
You could be free and fearless, you might win
The goal I could not reach; might boldly speak
The truths I dared not utter.

Yes, I dreamed
Your voice might thrill the great soul of the World;
And strong for truth, and brave for truth might lead
With clarion peal the march of Right, and bid
Wrong and Oppression tremble on their thrones.

Ah, me! tonight how vain and wild they seem—
Those earthly visions, those proud hopes I built
For you my darling—lying like a flower
The flames have scathed in passing; wild they seem
As kneeling so, I hold in mine that hand
My fancy clothed with manhood's strength and grace,
Now limp and paralyzed, while the bright mind

That was my joy and pride—alas! they say
It will not look again from these sweet eyes—
That even if life creeps back, and the fell fiend
Of fever quits his prey, the kingly Thought
Will never throne itself on this fair brow,
But crouch a fettered prisoner in its cell.

The thought is madness: Better the sweet life
Beating so wild against its fragile cage
Should free itself and pass—ah! to what shore?
To what changed form? The earth-life blotted out—
The memory of my face—my cradling arms?
Vainly I ask—the night, the stars, my Soul,
Return no answer. I can only trust.

THE GOLDEN ROD.

The golden rod is a-bloom;
The summer will soon be over,
For this is the yellow plume
That nods at her bier forever.

This is the flame alway,
That burns at her rich cremation,
Ere autumn's cloud-cup gray
Pours out on her urn libation.

The golden rod is a-bloom;
Our dream will soon be over,
It will find with the summer its tomb,
Is it not best so, my lover?

Born of the Summer's sweet,
A glowing, but fitful fever;
Let it go with her swallows fleet,
And be Memory no retriever.

THE HOUR WHEN WE SHALL MEET.

"Shall we not meet again?" Even now I see
Your proud mouth tremble, and I feel your eyes,
Appealing yet compelling, fixed on me
Withering my will; I answered then with sighs.
But I am stronger now; hope is long past,
And the blue billows of the stormy main
Roll wide and wild between us. Now, at last,
My heart gives answer: "We shall meet again."

Not in an hour, which any tongue of time,
Brazen or silver, may ring on the air;
Not when the voice of streams in joyful chime
Summons young April, shaking from her hair
Clusters of scented hyacinths, darkly blue
As your own subtle eyes; nor when the shade
Of whispering leaves—of summer-ripened hue—
Bathes my hot brow in some sequestered glade;

Nor when the autumn clusters of the vine
Hang purple in the sun, and the faint breath
Of languid flowers and sigh of haunted pine
With plaintive sweetness prophesy of death.
Nor when I droop my weary head, as now,
Upon my hand beside the winter hearth,
Shall your quick step, your kiss upon my brow,
Make me forget that ever grief had birth.
No; never more shall sunlight's golden sheen,
Nor the pale stars—a wierd and watchful train—
Nor yet the moonlight, chilly and serene,
Look on the hour when we shall meet again.

Yet we shall meet. Listen; one winter day,
Standing where late the jasmines were a-bloom,
You said, when life's red current ebbed away
That we should, like the flowers, sink to a tomb
Of dust and nothingness upon the breast
Of earth whence we had drawn our sustenance,
And that the sleep would be eternal rest;
And then you met my anxious, upturned glance,
And smiled and said that the mysterious scheme
Which in the world's dim ages priests had spun
Of life beyond, was but a dotard's dream;
And I believed you, for you were the sun
To my unfolding mind. But that is past.
I have heard my soul speak in the lone night hours
And in the silence of the temples vast
That Nature rears, and when the dreaded power

Of Death had stamped pale foreheads, I have knelt
To catch the meaning in the dying eyes;
And so have solved the mystery. I have *felt*
Your teachings false: The spirit never dies.

There is a life beyond; and *we shall meet*—

The thought falls like a dead flower on my heart—
Meet only once at the dread judgment seat,

Clasp hands, look in each other's eyes and part,
And part forever. Oh! by all the years

My soul has kept your memory enshrined,
By all my prayers, my bitter, hidden tears,

The silent love to long despair resigned,
I charge you let that single look be kind,

Full of unuttered love—as parting breath
Breathed out in kisses, when the lips entwined

Shall soon be severed by the hand of Death.

The gulf that then shall part us is more deep

And dark than death. Oh! let that last look be

One of immortal love that I may keep

Its sacred memory through eternity.

HER ANSWER.

Have you heard aright! reject you?
I am pleased to jest to-night?
No, it is no matter for trifling,
You have truly heard aright.
I've refused your offer of marriage,
Though not, as you say, with scorn.
I would not repay with sneering
Any love that was honest born.
And yours I think is earnest,
Though so mixed with self-conceit
You think you honor me, stooping
As to pluck a flower at your feet,
Because you have lands and money,
Earned by your father, dead,
And I am a penniless maiden
And work for my daily bread.

Why have I refused your offer?
You have a right to know?
Then I will tell you truly,
Since you will have it so.
Could I brook the kiss of betrothal
From lips that are hot with wine,
Or swear to honor a manhood
Enslaved at Bacchante's shrine?
Yet more; there's a girl (I nursed her
In an hour of her sorest need).

Once she was pure—she told me
Whose hand sowed the evil seed,
Who cunningly wrought her ruin
Through her woman's heart that was weak.
I saw her press to her baby's
Her blighted and tear-washed cheek.

And *you* ask a woman to give you
Her hand that is clean as a flower!
You think that for you—and your money—
She will barter her womanhood's dower!
I could smile at your vain presumption,
But that my heart is sad
When I think of the world's false standards;
How it kneels to the gilded Bad:
For I know there *are* women who study
Your fancy to catch and please,
Who smile on your sins in tolerance,
But I never can be of these.
They would scourge your fragile victim
From their midst with fiery rod,
But I hold that there lies your duty
And your wife in the sight of God.

LOVE ME LITTLE, LOVE ME LONG.

My love has ways of tender graciousness,
And looks that mutely tell me I am dear;
But she is shy: a delicate, quaint reserve
Half like a child's half like a queen's still keeps
My heart at distance, holds me gently back
When I would melt the snow of her white hands
With my hot lips, or crush her flower-head
With all its tendrils curls upon my breast.
I chide her, call her cold, say that she is
My icicle, my statue carved of snow,
Which I, unlike Pygmalion, may not warm;
My tantalus cup of amber, fragrant wine
Which I must sip, not quaff; then she will smile—
Playful and yet part sad—and say "Ah Vane,
You are not happy in your similes;
The warmed snow-statue would but melt and vex
You with its gushing, and the cup if quaffed
Is emptied soon, and likely thrown away.
I have a different philosophy."

"Aye? And what is it? Tell me,"

But she shakes

Her lovely head and says: "I'll paint it, maybe."
For she—this love of mine—when she has thoughts
Too deep or sweet for her shy lips to tell,
Puts them in graceful, allegoric forms
Upon her canvass. So, one April day

She drew me to her pretty studio, there
Placed me before her latest picture, fresh,
Scarce finished on the easel. A young maid—
(I knew the grave, sweet face—a fruit-girl, whom
My Florine petted, taught to read and sing),
Sat in an alcove, while her white pet dove
Perched on her arm and fed her smiling lips
With cherries from a salver heaped with rich,
Ripe fruit before her. Daintily the bird
Held one red globule in his silver beak,
And with it severed the almost redder lips.

“Charming!” I said. “Thus might a fay at night
Feed a young rose with drops of magic dew
To change its snow to crimson.”

“Has it then
No meaning else?” she asked. “It clasps the sense
Of my philosophy. The salver holds
The joys of life; the fair child typifies
Young Wisdom which refrains from emptying life,
With eager greed, of all its luscious store;
And rather chooses that the winged Hours
Should feed her slowly joy by joy, even though
The joy were love, the sweetest one of all,
The saddest to remember when ’tis gone.”

“‘Love little and love long,’” so that’s your creed,
Who taught you such gray wisdom, golden-head?”

“Love taught me, so I think,” she said, “Love sure
Was the forbidden fruit of knowledge, eaten
By our first mother. Love makes wondrous wise
Us women, and we see you prize us most,
Not when we pour our hearts’ wine lavishly
To crown your feast, but when we hold the cup
Back from your eager quaffing, suffering you
To taste, not drain it. So my salver here
(Touching her breast), holds store of royal grapes
I fain would crush in one rich draught for you:
I will be wiser, and like Myrrha’s dove,
Stint the exhaustless store lest you should hold
The gift too common, as is your man’s way.”

IN THE STREET.

Wild cloud-racks in the sky; a pitiless blast
Sweeping with freezing power the city’s street,
Where she—fortune’s own darling in days past—
Now treads with little weary, thin-clad feet.
A sweet, pure face, a slight pathetic form;
Yet a proud spirit hides beneath the fold
Of the worn shawl that wraps her from the storm;
A spirit that would shame me were I bold
Enough to offer gifts to her to-day,
And send the sensitive blood to her pale cheek,
And to her eyes the swift, rebuking ray.
So proud is she that I—I dare not speak,

Or look my love and pity as I pass,
Seated on silken cushions, with my wheels
Casting the snow against her skirts: one glance
She lifts and passes. Ah! she never feels
How wild I yearn to fold her to my side
Where sits another, crimson-cheeked and bright,
But not like her—my sweet, my azure-eyed,
My bud that chilling poverty will blight,
While I sit wrapped in luxury. Oh my dove!
Braving the tempest for your dear ones' sake,
Would I might shield you with my yearning love,
And of my arms a nest of shelter make.

WHITE HYACINTHS.

Where a tress of her silken hair was looped,
The bells of the snow-white hyacinth drooped;
Dewy-sweet in the ball room glare,
The flower was the one fresh thing that was there.
I caught its breath in our wild Strauss waltz,
And whispered: "At least *this* is not false,
You are bright as your gems, would you were true
As your flower yet wet with the twilight dew."

She loosed her hand and reached for the flower;
"Take it," she murmured, "and from this hour,
Let it be a sign of my love for you,
Hid as the hyacinth hides its dew;

Others may praise me as star and gem;
Cold and glittering I am to them,
But the hidden heart holds a sweeter dower;
To you, I am ever the hyacinth flower."

Springs have flown, and the hyacinths bloom
Snowy-fair on my darling's tomb.
Lovely but lonely, queen to the last,
Like a star, cloud-smitten, my lady passed;
Starlike they had called her, cold and bright
As the gems that blaze on the brow of night;
None guessed the secret we hid so well
In the fragrant heart of a hyacinth bell.

She wore to the last her mask of pride,
And gave me never a token beside:
Never a kiss from the perfect mouth,
Sweet as the roses of the South;
Never a touch of the slender hand,
White as a shell on the ocean strand:
But I wronged her never with doubting mood
Or stress of passion: I understood
I had seen her heart unveiled in an hour,
I held its token—a hyacinth flower.

STIRRING ASHES.

The room was half in shade, the hour was late,
The fire had nearly died within the grate.
Sudden, there was a blaze: I turned my head.
" 'Tis letters I am burning," Margaret said.
" Letters?—his letters? Oh then, that is well;
If with them perish too his baleful spell
And all your love for him." " That love is dead—
Dead as these ashes that you see me tread."
She touched the ashes with her slippered foot,
When, all at once, I saw a flame up shoot.
A half-burned fragment in the mass concealed
Blazed brightly up, and by the glow revealed
I read the written words: "Thine own till death."
The flame died down; 'twas over in a breath.
The room was shadowy and still again
Until a sound—a stifled moan of pain—
Escaped from Margaret: her eyes were bent
Upon the ashen pile, its flame all spent.
She looked up, met my searching glance and said
With a pitiful smile: "The ashes were not dead;
They burned," tapping her silken-slippered toe.
Ah, poor proud heart! I only said, "I know:
'Tis dangerous to stir ashes; there may glow
Some hidden spark or latent flame below."

BREAD AND OIL.

When the bright year had burst to fullest flower,
The Plague came, veiled in rosy haze and masked
In fragrant bloom. Creeping with stealthy step,
She bound the hapless City with her chain
Ere it had felt a warning shadow fall
Across its beauty.

All unheeded now
The sunset flamed ; ripe fruits dropped in the grass
Of the neglected gardens ; Traffic's sounds
Were silent in the mart ; Death's ghastly trade
Alone was busy. The dark hearse, the cart
Freighted with dead, swift rumbled o'er the street.
"The Dead—how fast they ride !" the idiot shrieked,
The starving parrot, forgotten in his cage,
Took up the cry.

It was Death's carnival.
The Plague was queen. She stretched her livid arm
And cried : "I am supreme ;—I and my train—
Gaunt Famine, Fear and hollow-eyed Despair.
We have driv'n back *all* that minister to Man:
Commerce has furled her sails, Pleasure has dropped
Her wreath and cymbal, Hope and Love have fled.
Man is surrendered us to rack and slay."

Around the stricken city, Fear had drawn
A cruel danger-line ; beyond it rang
The wailing cry of " Help !" and lo, there stepped
Across it, through the poisonous mists, One fair
As seraphs that trail their snowy wings across
The bridge of asphodels, which spans the gulf
'Twixt earth and heaven, to welcome much-tried souls.

So fair, so grand she seemed—blessed Charity,
Bringing her message from the outer world,
Sweet even to the dying. " Ye are not
Abandoned ; man has not forgotten to feel
For man his brother. Death has girt you round
As with a wall of fire, but Love for man—
Divinest Charity—breaks through and brings
Succor and soothing, help and sympathy."

Oh ! noble message , oh ! heroic souls !
Bravers of danger, horror and fatigue
That would appal the stoutest warrior's heart ;
And you, who bade your steam-winged vessels seek
These deadly shores with help—not all were friends—
Of our own clime ; many the Northern sun
Had kissed more coldly ; but not cold their hearts ;
These warm and quick leaped out to meet the cry
Of the plague-stricken city ; generous hands
Flashed out with aid as free as rains of heaven
From scanty stores as from o'erflowing tills.

Are these the hearts we had deemed were cold and
hard—

Banned from us by that mist of bloody years
Which floated still between us? We had seemed
Like Ishmael in the desert, faint and worn
While Isaac ate within the tent and mocked;
Not Isaac now; ye seem the angel sent
To Ishmael in the dreary wilderness
With saving bread and oil—bread that has fed
Our failing strength, and oil of sympathy
That overflows the cup in which 'twas poured
And heals a Nation's wound. Blessed bread and oil
Which Mercy brought, nor dreamed the double good
She wrought in bringing, for the troubled waves
Sink to sweet peace, peace chimes in every breast
And Love has knit a grateful People's heart.
More closely than would bands of iron laws,

OUR COUNTRY'S NEED.

She needs not wealth; its jeweled crown
On her proud forehead shines,
For setting suns look lingering down
On her exhaustless mines;
And sturdy hands draw golden yields,
From all her countless harvest fields.

A thousand iron steeds are hers,
More fleet than hart or hind;

Their tramp the mountain echo stirs,
Their breath is on the wind ;
Laden with stores from Labor's hand,
And treasures from Pacific's strand,
Her iron slaves rush through the land.

And Commerce sends her vassals forth—
Ships winged by steam or sail ;
Wide on the seas of South and North
Our flag defies the gale.
Aye, shore and ocean loudly vaunt
That wealth is not our country's want.

And Nature's lavish hand has flung
Wild beauty o'er the land.
Her cliffs by forests overhung,
Her rivers broad and grand,
Her lone blue lakes and mountains bold
In song and story have been told.

Nor needs she genius—in her bowers
Each muse securely dwells,
On her fair plains they gather flowers
And laurels on her hills.
The world will own our land ere long
The Attica of wit and song.

What needs she then, this land of ours,
So rich in wit and wealth,

With grace and beauty for her dower,
Hearts strong in youth and health ?
Her path winds up to "perfect day,"
What lion crouches in her way ?

The ship that rides the stormy sea
When clouds the heavens o'er shade,
May strong in ropes and timbers be,
Yet if there be not laid
A steady hand upon her helm
The waves will the strong bark o'erwhelm.

Our Country needs this steady hand
Upon her ship of State ;
She needs a spirit to command—
One wisely good and great ;
One firm and true, to whom is known
No interests but his country's own.

MY BIRTH NIGHT.

Pass silent on, ye Memories ;
I would not look into your eyes
For half the stars in yonder skies.

And you, ye shadowy Years to come,
Why should I summon you to-night ?
For Hope stands drooping, wan and dumb
And Fear sleeps in the fading light.
What can ye bring to charm or sear
To wake a thrill or force a tear ?

My lip has deeply been embued
In every cup the Fates have brewed
For souls with feeling's power endued.
I've drunk the fragrant dew of life
Ere yet its day-star shone aboon ;
And known the weariness and strife
Of its tempestuous noon ;
I've tried all feelings on my heart—
Torn all the rose's leaves apart.

The mysteries of futurity
Have come in broken gleams to me,
Like glimmerings of a far-off sea.
I've felt the grandeur of the soul
Beneath the star-filled dome of night,
A sense of its supernal goal—
Its upward, its unending flight,
From worn-out forms its pinions freeing,
To plume itself for higher being.

What now remains ? The past has brought
The gifts of feeling, faith and thought;
And years with burning life o'er fraught
 Too soon had ripened brain and heart
 Before my brow had lost its youth;
Oh Years, no more can you impart
 No unknown gift of joy or ruth;
One boon—one only craves my breast—
Say—will you bring it ?—only rest.

IF

Love, if I were a spirit, a thing from ether bright,
Invisible as mountain air and free and fair as light,
Though I should rove through space and find each
 planet's golden girth,
The air you breathe would be to me the dearest home
 on earth.
When slumber sealed your snowy lids, I'd hover at
 your side,
To watch that none but happy dreams should round
 your pillow glide.
I'd part with breeze-like touch, the locks upon your
 temples fair
And whisper Aiden's sweetest words into your spirit's
 ear.
A bodiless being could not sin, and 'twould not *then* be
 wrong
To tell the love I dare not breathe except in sighs or song.

ISABEL.

She is beautiful, yes, so an icicle is,

But who could dream that those calm, proud lips
Could melt on his in a womanly kiss,

Or that love could hide in those eyes dark crypts?
So thought I of queenly Isabel,

As I watched her glide o'er the ball room floor;
And the thought was pain, for I loved her well,
Though I vowed to seek her never more.

A tender mother had once been mine,
Her memory still was a sacred shrine,
And the wife I took to my heart must be
Gentle and womanly-sweet as she.
Such could never be Isabel,
Though in her dark eyes witcheries dwell.

* * * * *

One day when a storm had swept the land,

I wandered out in a restless mood,

And saw the sky with a rainbow spanned,

And the scattered boughs in the wet, green wood;
And near fair Isabel's stately hall

I spied on the ground a broken nest,
And three young birdlings, featherless all,
Save for the down on each tiny breast.

Hovering together, cold and scared,
They chirped their griefs in a piteous strain:
Ill no doubt, had the mother fared
In the storm that blew from the angry main.
“Poor callow things; some claw or beak, ’
Less cruel than hunger will end your woes,”
I said, as I passed them by to seek
The shore where the waves in their unreprieve
Still murmured hoarse and broke at my feet
In sullen foam as I stood there long.
I turned at last from their gloomy beat
And their voice that echoed my heart’s sad song.

I strolled back over the storm-lashed ground,
But stopped transfixed when I neared the spot
Where the wrecked nest had been strewn around.
On the chill, damp ground the birds lay not.
Soft hands had gathered them tenderly;
Warm fingers cherished each shivering bird.
Low tones were murmuring pityingly,
So dove-like sweet that my heart was stirred.
Wide-open the hungry bird-mouths flew,
And she fed them there with a loving art
Her sweet eyes full of the pitying dew
That could only come from a gentle heart.
Then first I knew she was no Frost-Queen,
But a human woman, warm and sweet:
And unchecked by her stately maiden-mien,
I laid my heart, unspurned, at her feet;

ARANTH.

Sleepless and dreaming, still my pale Aranth!
Your deep eyes, my star-gazer, are tonight
Dark with the shadow of that nameless grief—
The spirit's longing for the unattained—
Perchance its homesick pining for a past,
Which lies outside of earth and this, our day,
The soul, thrown as a shell upon Time's shore,
Moaning for the lost ocean of its birth—
The vast sea of the eternal.

Griefs like these
Are but as shadows of strange birds that fly
Over still waters, coming none knows whence—
A poet's sadness, faint as the far note
Of those high-flying birds; would that life had
No deeper sorrow: would your dreams might play
Only about the brow of hoary Grief!

For Grief is old; to her Mirth is a child,
A fluttering leaf upon a mossy tree.
Grief is as old as earth; the winds have voice
Only to sigh; the wild rain sobs, the stream
Utters its plaint, the great sea heaves and means
As with the burden of a secret woe
It would confess, but must not till the end.

The strong, convulsive shudderings of Earth,
When she shakes off her puny tyrant, man,
Or sucks him down to death with the hot breath
Drawn through her mumbling lips—these quakes
of Earth

Are they not throes of grief for some past cause
Or terror of some dark, impending doom?
Once, long ago, I dreamed that Earth was cursed
In her bright youth for some mysterious sin
And sent with her one mate—the pale-faced Moon,
To wander for long eons through space and bear
Man's insults, drink his tears and hold his dust.

Older than Earth is Grief—as old as sin.
What bright eyes wept when the Archangel fell,
What seraph-guardian of a fated star
Veiled her sad face when the fair world she loved
Smitten with flaming doom, vanished from space,
No mortal knows. But these immortal griefs
Are themes to dream of on calm heights of
thought.

Come down from those star-heights, my poet, as
came

That princely One from heights above the stars.
The human heart, the warm, wild, yearning heart
Holds sadder mysteries than all star-filled space.

A DARK HOUR.

The winter sky is wild tonight;
The wind—a haunted, homeless thing—
Goes moaning on its aimless flight,
While like a dying vulture's wing,
The sere bough flaps against the pane
Wet with the chilly winter rain.

But little reck I that no light
In yonder shrouded sky appears,
For were there stars in heaven tonight
I could not count them for my tears.
Their moving glories would to me
But mark how swift the night-hours flee,
How soon you will be far from me.

A GRAVEYARD RABBIT.

When the autumn twilight falls
And the muffled screech owl calls
From his covert in the cedar, dark as night,
You may see this rabbit sitting
On a lonely grave, or flitting
'Mong the grassy mounds, with ghostly noiseless flight.

He is wise—this ancient rabbit,
It has been his wary habit,
To take refuge 'mong these grave-stones, old and gray,
Since, when pressed by gun and hound,
He that friendly crevice found
In the old wall near the ground,
And thus balked his keen pursuer of his prey.

This was in his callow youth,
He has learned since then the truth;
Ever danger lurks where pleasures most abound.
Nibbling grave-yard herbs at ease,
He contents himself with these,
Shuns the patch of juicy peas
Guarded by those dreaded dragons—boy and hound.

So long has he been found
Here, on consecrated ground,
That a sanctity invests this rabbit gray.
“He’s a hant,” the darkies say,
“It would take our luck away,
To kill him eben for the pot—Thanksgiving day.”

When the moonlit night is still,
Oft I sit upon this hill
Where the dead sleep each beneath a grassy roof,
Just the rabbit, owl and I
And the winds that faintly sigh,
While all human sight and sounds are far aloof.

Then, if only one long dead
Should rise from her earthly bed
As rises a white mist-wreath from the wave,
She might safely join us here,
For we would not feel a fear,
Would not break by word or tear
The brief midnight spell that held her from her grave.

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